

PeaceACT

- An AWPR Newsletter

February 2023



Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation



From the Editor's desk:

Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to present to you our inaugural AWPR Newsletter, PeaceACT ~ Peace: Action, Commitment, Togetherness.

There is much work going on in the region, at many levels, engaging women in peace processes and peace-building. These activities are helmed by active, dedicated women and men, who work with businesses, governments and local communities tirelessly.

They are our instruments, operationalizing peace in Southeast Asia. This newsletter hopes to showcase their work, and the work of our member states through their AWPR members. The name PeaceACT, abbreviated as PACT - a commitment, an undertaking - reveals how our members in their different capacities and through their projects have reached out to their communities and stakeholders in their efforts to promote the safety and security of women and girls, and how they have carved out areas where women's contribution to peacebuilding is lifted up and acknowledged. I am honoured to document these activities here.

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It has been another interesting year for the AWPR as we match our diverse strengths and expertise to ongoing and planned initiatives at regional and national levels to address the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework – of protection, prevention, participation and women's role in relief and recovery, in Southeast Asia.

In the next few pages you will read about the research and fieldwork undertaken, and high-level events conducted or attended by our members from across the region, proving that we are an active registry. From working with refugees, eradicating violence against women, and countering violent extremism, to protecting the rights of indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia, and researching new and emerging issues such as WPS and digital security, we are committed to building a peaceful and secure region.

I hope you enjoy browsing through these pages. I would also love to hear from you. Please direct your comments or queries to online.forum@asean-aipr.org Your feedback is valuable and will help us make this newsletter a better one.

I would like to take this opportunity, in our first issue, to mention all the assistance rendered to the editorial team. First, thanks go to my fellow AWPR members who have taken time off from their busy schedules to write about their work and research for this newsletter. Special thanks go to Ms Amina Rasul-Bernardo and Ms Teresita Quintos Deles for their support and encouragement, and to Ms Ayu Kartika Dewi and her team who stepped in to help with the production process. I would also like to thank the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation for supporting this publication. Happy reading!



Dr Tamara Nair

Dear Friends,

The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) is a new part of the infrastructure for peace in ASEAN. In spite of being a newcomer, it is a programme that is well thought and carries with it a mandate that allows more creativity and engagement between governments and civil society; this as reflected in the composition of the members and their networks.

AWPR has big shoes to fill in the work of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It does not have any illusions that it is a centre of gravity for peace in the region. While it is merely a pool of expertise, the members are committed to be a source of knowledge, skills, networks, but most importantly, the registry adds energy to addressing the difficult and challenging realities of the region.

Certainly, there are high expectations of AWPR – from those that envisioned it, from the ASEAN member states and the ASEAN peoples themselves. People from all walks of life are largely hopeful that beyond official statements and documents, there will be an ASEAN that is free from the suffering of armed conflict, and violence and inequalities.

At this point, it is too soon for AWPR to demonstrate its ability, but the fact that AWPR members are coming together, talking to each other and learning to work for peace, this in itself is proving to be a transformation in ASEAN. In the near future, AWPR, hopefully, will lead in actively engaging more civil society networks knowing that this will be their source of strength and sustainability. After all, there can never be enough resources in the work for peace.

On the occasion of AWPR's maiden newsletter issue, it is but right to commend the ASEAN member states that supported the AWPR, and nominated the members that are tasked to make this an awesome AWPR! Thank you, ASEAN! We are excited about the development of the AWPR!



Dr Ayesah Uy Abubakar

Peacebuilding in Southeast Asia : The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry



It was not a smooth ride for ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) to come into existence given the post-conflict situations in some member states and the problematizing of gender matters within what is a highly militarized and masculinized arena. Issues of gender did not sit easy with issues of peace and security for a long time even though the role of women in peacebuilding was quite obvious in member states such as the Philippines. The naming of the registry too saw a number of versions get pulled down owing to the perceived sensitivity. In time, in true ASEAN fashion, the registry found universal consensus and was unanimously adopted.

The importance of investigating and addressing the gendered impacts of conflict cannot be stressed enough. This is what the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, initiated with the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, has aimed to do, both within the UN system and in the National Action Plans, or NAPs, of countries. ASEAN's 2017 Joint Statement on promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda highlights its commitment to greater inclusion and consultation with women, and is a very welcome one considering it is one of the last regional bodies to adopt this agenda.

The joint statement recognised the disproportionate suffering of women in armed conflicts. It acknowledged that the root causes of conflict are often social injustice, gender inequality, and economic exclusion of some communities, and especially of vulnerable women. This could be linked to the underlying reasons for radicalisation and violent extremism. Nothing highlights this acknowledgement better than the launch of the registry in December 2018. However, member states have much to do before the agenda can be realised through the workings of the AWPR.

The registry was launched 13 December 2018 in Cebu City, Philippines, at a symposium helmed by the Philippine Mission to ASEAN, in collaboration with the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (Philippines) and with the support of ASEAN Institute of Peace and Reconciliation (henceforth, AIPR), together with the Ateneo De Manila University. The idea took root at an AIPR workshop in 2015, which discussed the role of women in peace and reconciliation. With strong advocacy from the Philippines representative, Ambassador Elizabeth P. Buensuceso, participants recommended the creation of an ASEAN Women for Peace Registry, which came to fruition three years later.

The registry was a means to take stock of women experts in peace processes in the region, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the ASEAN charter. The registry is also in line with AIPR's pursuit of pooling expertise and supporting ASEAN bodies in larger efforts towards peacebuilding. The AWPR, under the auspices of AIPR, would be the latter's contribution towards ASEAN's goal of promoting the WPS agenda in the region. Built from expertise in social activism, academia and government, the registry hosts representatives from all ten members states.

There have been a number of meetings convened after the launch of the registry where members have been consulted in moving the registry's agenda forward. One of the first items of importance was to map the expertise the registry had – a process which included the registry members detailing their areas of expertise and what they can bring to the table. Subsequently, a number of events have been organised for AWPR participation and have been well-attended. This is ongoing, and I believe will remain so, especially in areas connecting peace and gender parity.

In 2020, the AWPR saw members' participation in the AIPR discussion series on Climate Change and Peace in October. The discussion sought to further explore how climate change is linked to peacebuilding. On October 30, 2020, members were also involved in an AIPR webinar on empowering women and youth in building sustainable peace. In November 2020, members' input was sought on a draft ASEAN regional study on WPS. 2021 and 2022 saw nothing less in terms of meetings, events and serious discussions around women's role in peacebuilding. The global pandemic and the change in work conditions and travel have not stopped the 'wheels from turning' as far as the registry is concerned.

The AWPR is an excellent move towards creating lasting peace in the region. One of the most important steps member states should now take is to think about fully utilising the registry and the expertise of its members to collect relevant data and continue research to fill gaps in our understanding of the lived experiences of women in the region. This will be vital and serve as a starting point to build capacity among women peace builders that will make our peace efforts durable.

Adapted from:

Nair, Tamara. "ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR)", (p131). In Kamarulzaman Askandar (Ed) Peace and Conflict Transformation in Southeast Asia. (Bangkok, Thailand: ASEAN University Network – Human Rights Education (AUN-HRE), Strengthening Human Rights and Peace Research and Education in ASEAN/Southeast Asia (SHAPE-SEA), and the Southeast Asian Conflict Studies Network (SEACSN), supported by the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), University of Oslo), 2021.

MEMBERS IN ACTION!

Dr Arifah Rahmawati
AWPR, Indonesia

Women's Economic Empowerment for a Resilient and Peaceful Community in Tamanjeka Village in Poso, Central Sulawesi Province of Indonesia

Women's involvement in violent extremist ideology and acts are widely acknowledged as having increased. In Indonesia, 39 women have been convicted or awaiting trial on terrorism charges since 2004 (IPAC 2020: 2). They take various strategic roles in violent extremist groups, such as logistics arrangers, narrative makers, financiers, campaigners, couriers, and even combatants. Several studies have looked into a wide range of factors and most indicate that poverty or economic inequalities are driving forces that force women to become part of acts of violent extremism.

However, women can also play a vital role in preventing and countering violent extremism. As wives and mothers, women can recognize early signs of radicalisation in their family members. Within a gendered division of labour, women are expected to be responsible for their children's activities and wellbeing. They can potentially create greater dialogue and communication with their families to provide broader viewpoints and propagate values of non-violence. As community members, women can also spread religious tolerance and promote counter-narratives to social divisions and hatred.

In line with the above, Dr Arifah Rahmawati and the Center for Security and Peace Studies (CSPS) of Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with the support of the Australia Grant Scheme, are working on the issue of "Women's Economic Empowerment for Resilient and Peaceful Community".



The project will run from 2022 to 2023. The study targets 30 women who are married or related to former prisoners jailed for terrorism charges. The objectives of the project include: (1) decreasing underdevelopment, poverty, and inequality, seen as part of the causes of violent extremism; (2) preventing women's engagement in violent extremism ideology and activity; and (3) enhancing women's confidence, self-efficacy, and skills to take part in decision-making that will contribute directly to their participation in preventing/countering violent extremism. The project focuses on Tamanjeka village in the Poso Regency in Central Sulawesi Province.

Poso witnessed a bloody communal conflict, between 2000 and 2002, transform into acts of terrorism by the jihadi group East Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT). The region is an attractive site for growing extremist ideology in Indonesia. IPAC (2020) reported that the Poso cluster contributed 18 percent of the total number of women convicted on terrorism charges. This number includes three of the the country's first female combatants who gained military training while hiding out in the jungles of Gunung Biru.



Ms. Ayu Kartika Dewi
AWPR, Indonesia
Facilitating Policy Discussion on Sexual Assault

On the 22nd of July 2022, Ms Ayu Kartika Dewi collaborated with UNESCO MGIEP (Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development) to facilitate a discussion between Indonesian policymakers and youth regarding online sexual harassment. The first half of the event involved the youth presenting policy recommendations to high-level policymakers.

The 18 young people selected to present included gender rights advocates, legal experts, social workers, and students. Their recommendations aimed at improving the legal framework used in Indonesia to deal with online sexual harassment cases.



The second half of the event saw the policymakers and youth engage in discussion on how to sharpen the recommendations that were presented and how these recommendations could be implemented in Indonesia.

The poise and expertise displayed by the young presenters were impressive. Their policy recommendations were comprehensive. They addressed issues in the existing legal framework, suggesting possible improvements.

Youth, when given the opportunity to voice their opinions, can contribute significantly to social progress!



Ms. Fadilawati Masran
AWPR, Malaysia
Strata Community Mediation Center

Ms Fadilawati Masran has been trained as a community mediator by the Malaysian Department of National Unity. Since then, she and other community mediators have organized the Malaysian Association of Community Mediators. Through her leadership as chair, they helped establish the Strata Community Mediation Centre at the Kuala Lumpur City Hall in 2018.





At this center, they provide mediation services among parties, resolving social conflicts and complaints among neighbours, address general management and law enforcement issues, as well as other issues where the public voluntarily submit to a mediation process. The center has also been used by the police and the Department of National Unity to deal with racial and ethnic-related conflicts. In 2019, Ms Fadilawati also organised a Community Mediation Centre in KRT Tongkang Pechah town in Johor Bahru state.

Ms. Deborah Henry AWPR, Malaysia Fugee Organization

Deborah Henry's dedication and passion rest in the humanitarian work she does, championing the lives of refugee children in Malaysia. In 2009, Deborah co-founded a non-profit called Fugee Organization which runs a school for refugee children in Kuala Lumpur.

Fugee was conceived from the simple premise of ensuring all children have access to school and the right to build a meaningful life. Over 500 refugees and asylum seekers have received primary and secondary education through Fugee.

Blending syllabi from the UK and Singapore, the school uses a holistic approach addressing three major components: social and emotional development, academic and crisis support.



This approach puts children at the centre and rallies the community — parents, volunteers, and partners — to ensure each child is given the resources and support they need to succeed.

Since 2018, the Fugee Youth Academy has provided access to education and career opportunities for Fugee School students, alumni, and youth from refugee communities across Malaysia. In 2022, the Youth Academy successfully launched The HiEd Scholarship Programme and is currently sponsoring the higher education of five refugee youth in Malaysia, with a new 2023 batch already being considered.

In the last five years, Deborah has also become a full-fledged 'socialpreneur,' managing Fugeelah, a sustainable jewelry brand that channels its profits to the education of refugee children and offers jobs to the youth.



Dr. Ayesah Uy Abubakar AWPR, Malaysia Consolidation for Peace Programme

Dr Ayesah joined the podcast *She Talks Peace* in the podcast's 50th episode. She shared her experience developing the Consolidation for Peace (COP) Programme for Mindanao/Bangsamoro, Aceh, and Southern Thailand (2007-2014). The COP is an example of a Track 1.5 peace process, especially in the case of Mindanao/Bangsamoro. She emphasized how this kind of peacebuilding programme is successful because the parties concerned and local stakeholders are not only invited participants but co-creators and owners of the programme.

For the first time following pandemic travel restrictions, Dr Ayesah also participated in the 2022 Thailand International Conference of NGOs in History and Peace organized by the History NGO Forum for Peace in East Asia (South Korea) and Chiang Mai University in Thailand.



As a panellist, she discussed the challenges of civil society involvement in ASEAN through the ASEAN People's Assembly, ASEAN Civil Society Forum, ASEAN-CSO accreditation initiative, and attempts by the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) to give a consultative status among regional NGOs like that of the UN.

She expressed hope that other ASEAN-related entities would also follow the AICHR example or introducing better means of partnership. Dr Ayesah also contended that AIPR and AWPR have several regional NGOs they could collaborate with, especially around peace and human rights.



EPISODE 50

Educator Ayesah Abubakar
Talks Peace is Inclusive
with Amina Rasul



She named the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Strengthening of Human Rights and Peace Research Education (SHAPE-SEA) as good examples, among many others.

Dr Ayesah recently completed her research on Undocumented Persons in Sabah (2019-2021) for the UN Country Team Malaysia and a Needs Assessment on the Setting up of a Child Activity Centre for Children in Street Situations in Kota Kinabalu (2021-2022) for UNICEF and the Sabah Department of Social Welfare. She will soon start another research project on the Inclusion of Undocumented Persons in the SDGs (2022-2024) with a grant from the Ministry of Education.

On October 16, 2021, Dr Ayesah together with Mr Edmond Bon Tai Soon, the former Malaysian Representative to AICHR, and the Malaysia National Working Group on Human Rights Mechanism, organized an online regional dialogue on "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the State of Play of the UNDRIP in Southeast Asia." The dialogue highlighted the lack of a common definition for 'indigenous peoples' and the need for ASEAN to strengthen its commitment to the group's rights and welfare.

Ms Amina Rasul Bernardo AWPR, Philippines *She Talks Peace* Podcast is now a year old!

Ms Amina Rasul-Bernardo hosts the podcast, *She Talks Peace*. Readers are encouraged to tune in and listen to Episode 51: Missing Peace, Finding Hope, with AWPR members Amina Rasul, Dr Ayesah Abubakar, and Dr Amporn Marddent. To celebrate the first anniversary of the podcast, AWPR members, together with Prof Aurora Javate de Dios, Ms Dina Zaman, Dr Jenny Lind Elmaco, and Ms Atty Salma Pir Rasul, shared inspirational quotes they live by and discussed the highlight events over the past year – specifically, the evolution of peace in the world, the spaces women occupy, and finding hope in all that is happening.



Please click, play and listen on Spotify:
<https://spoti.fi/3BOxWJw>

Apple Podcasts:
<https://apple.co/3P4aVp4>

Ms Teresita Quintos Deles AWPR, Philippines

International Commission on Inclusive Peace (ICIP)/Principles for Peace (P4P)

On 17 January 2023, the International Commission on Inclusive Peace (also tag lined Principles for Peace/P4P), launched The Peacemaking Covenant, its flagship product, in Geneva, the day after it held its last meeting and convened the Stakeholders Platform, representing 120 organizations worldwide, for a final review of the Covenant and the proposed ways forward. ICIP member Teresita Quintos Deles attended these three events, as well as the Briefing conducted for UN Member States on 19 January 2023.

The Peacemaking Covenant is a framework outlining the Principles for Peace and the shifts in approach to peacemaking needed to deliver lasting, inclusive peace in the context of notable and tragic outbreaks of violence, humanitarian crises, and increased difficulties in peacebuilding globally. The Principles and the Covenant have been informed by an intensive two-year evidence generation process, including 700 case studies distilled and 150 consulta-



tions held in more than 60 countries, which engaged with thousands of stakeholders in both the grassroots and state levels. This included a Southeast Asian consultation, convened on behalf of the ICIP by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the GZO Peace Institute, in Manila on 4-5 October 2022.

The two-day consultation focused on the experiences of Timor Leste, Aceh in Indonesia, and the Bangsamoro of the Philippines, and sought feedback on the proposed peace-making covenant.

Participants from Myanmar, Southern Thailand, Malaysia, and Cambodia were also invited. Ms. Deles assisted in designing the meeting and led the discussion on the Bangsamoro peace process.



The ICIP, as an independent body, consisted of a diverse group of eminent experts and leaders, bringing together policy, practice, on-the-ground experiences, and high-level political leadership. Of the twelve commissioners, five are women, including the youngest, 32-year-old Ilwad Elman of Somalia/Canada. Ms. Deles served as the Lead Convenor for Local Partnership and Responsibility Sharing, a major pillar of discourse which fed into the crafting of the Peacemaking Covenant.

With the dissolution of the Commission upon the termination of its two-year mandate, the P4P Foundation has been established to serve as a follow-on and implementation mechanism to catalyze global, regional, national, and local efforts to build support and buy-in, as well as to institutionalize, monitor, and track the application of the principles, especially on the ground. Ms. Deles has been invited to sit as a member of the Foundation's Board.

Dr. Tamara Nair AWPR, Singapore

Women's Economic Security and the WPS agenda in Digital Security

Dr Tamara Nair's research looks at economic security in Southeast Asia that is connected to the survival and security of states. This macro definition can be contrasted with a more people-centred approach to economic security. Of particular concern is how men and women are affected differently in unstable times. We witness this now in this global pandemic. The current economic insecurities of women are not a reflection of historical gender norms but more a creation of contemporary neo-liberal economics as practised in the region. While Southeast Asia does well as a global economic hub, women do not have a fair share in its gains. Examining issues of power, liberating policies and women's rights and the right to decent work, will help in narrowing economic inequalities. This will be a vital step in rebuilding national economies in Southeast Asia, post-pandemic and in the years to come.



Dr Nair also has a keen interest in how the WPS agenda plays out in digital space. In her work on a Native WPS Agenda for ASEAN: Security in Digital Space, she discusses how ASEAN can indigenize the WPS agenda by studying its possible impacts in the digital ecosystem.

She presents the digital space and the impending Web 3.0 as ideal environments for doing so. Her most recent research interest includes looking into the WPS agenda in climate security.



Dr Nair was also featured in a photo exhibition developed by UN Women that featured stories of 20 leaders in WPS from different sectors across the ten ASEAN countries. The exhibition took place during the launch of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS in Cambodia in December, 2022.

Ms. Moe Thuzar **AWPR, Singapore** **Women in conflict prevention, recovery and healing**

In 2022, Ms Moe Thuzar has focused on facilitating several conversations and discussion of the various issues and concerns arising from the 1st February 2021 coup in Myanmar, including the social and economic impacts of the coup. One of the most recent conversations included a talk by the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy on Myanmar, Dr Noeleen Heyzer, who discussed, among others, women’s role and aspirations for post-conflict recovery and healing.

Drawing from the various insights and perspectives from these discussions, Ms Moe Thuzar proposes to examine women’s participation and involvement in post-conflict strategies and processes in selected Southeast Asian countries, including their role in mediation, reconstruction, and healing.

Women offer different insights and perspectives to the political, economic and social consequences of crisis or conflict situations. Women have an active role in negotiating conflict situations by providing active support or services, or taking on income-earning roles. However, they often are relegated to a secondary role in post-conflict reconstruction or peace negotiations, even as they remain active in civil society movements.

Women’s voices are also muted in economic recovery programmes, even though these decisions affect their post-conflict economic future and contributions.



Women in marginalised or deprived communities face a double disadvantage.

Through her proposed research, which complements that of fellow AWPR member Dr Tamara Nair, Ms Moe Thuzar aims to emphasise the importance of women’s empowerment in post-conflict reconstruction, and, through comparative assessment of various post-conflict situations in Southeast Asia, to identify how and where the ASEAN WPS agenda can assist ASEAN member states with possible practical solutions for current or future scenarios in the region.



Dr Amporn Marddent AWPR, Thailand WPS and PCVE

Dr Amporn Marddent participated in the WPS landmark resolution workshop in Bangkok on 23 June 2022. Dr Amporn, together with officials from the Thai government discussed issues related to human security, WPS, and women's empowerment amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Security Council of Thailand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the workshop.



Dr Amporn also contributed to a Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) workshop organized by IMAN Research. She shared her experiences working with the youth in Pattani and her students at her university to prevent the escalation of violent extremism through fine arts.

She also discussed Muslim family law and the women's role in reconciliation programmes with civil society organizations, academics, and professionals at a public forum on women and constitutional reform at the Prince of Songkla University in Thailand on 5 July 2022.

An event poster with a yellow background. At the top, it says 'OSEAN-CSO' and 'IMAN RESEARCH'. The main title is 'Creative Content as a Tool to Disengage and Deradicalize'. Below the title is a photo of four women. The event time is listed as 'Wednesday, August 3rd 2022' with three time slots: '03:00 PM Jakarta Time', '04:00 PM Kuala Lumpur Time', and '06:00 PM Melbourne Time'. The speakers are 'Mahi Ramakrishnan (Refugee Advocate, Journalist, & Filmmaker)', 'Linda Sumpenawati (PeaceGeneration, Indonesia)', and 'Dr. Amporn Marddent (Thammasat University, Thailand)'. The moderator is 'Dina Zaman (Co-Founder of IMAN Research, Malaysia)'. At the bottom, it says 'Free E-Certificate!'.

Dr Suphatmet Yunyasit AWPR, Thailand

Southern Buddhist Communities in Thailand Hold First Dialogue with State Actors Since Pandemic

On Sept 3, 2022, Dr Suphatmet Yunyasit facilitated a dialogue platform called 'Dialogue for the Restoration of the Buddhist Community of the Deep South.' She presented a 7-page-long policy recommendation paper based on her research on 20 Buddhist communities facing a state of social, economic, and cultural decline due to violent attacks by insurgent groups since 2004.

The 26 Buddhist representatives discussed and finalized the policy recommendation draft and engaged in dialogue with 25 representatives of various state agencies in charge of peacebuilding in the south, namely the Internal Security Operations Command of Region 4 (ISOC4), the Southern Border Province Administration Center (SBPAC), governors of four provinces in the south, and the Office of Buddhism.



Feature Article

She Talks Peace Amplifies the Voices of Women Peacebuilders Around the World

Eavesdrop on conversations between women peacebuilders around the world on *She Talks Peace*.



She Talks Peace is a podcast that highlights the role of women peacebuilders in bringing lasting peace and security to their communities.

Each podcast episode provides the public with stories of women peacebuilders from all over the world. Every week, guests discuss their work, the challenges they face securing peace in their countries, and the motivations behind their commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The podcast is moderated by President of the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and AWPR member Amina Rasul-Bernardo. Her co-hosts have included Malaysian think tank IMAN Research co-founder Ms Dina Zaman, and fellow AWPR member Dr Ayesah Uy Abubakar.

Primarily organized by the PCID and hosted by Podcast Network Asia, *She Talks Peace* is made possible by its close partnerships with the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), and the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN). The podcast is part of the WASL's "Stand with Women Peacebuilders," – a campaign that elevates the vital work of women peacebuilders as supported by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and ensures their recognition, participation, and protection. As ASEAN is moving to establish its Regional Action Plan for WPS, UN Women, Indonesia is supporting the podcast as a platform for training, education, networking, and information sharing for women peacebuilders, as well as highlight the importance of the regional plan of action in strengthening the foundation for peace in ASEAN.

The first episode released in August 2021 featured former Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Ms Delia Albert, and Ambassador Artauli Taubing, who is from Indonesia, and is also a member of the AIPR Governing Council. They discussed the potential of ASEAN as a model for peace and for championing women. "If it weren't for ASEAN, we would not be at peace with each other right now," said Ambassador Artauli.

AWPR members tell us that in Southeast Asia, anyone can talk peace

Conversations with the women of AWPR reveal that anyone can talk peace. In fact, everyone should be empowered to talk about peace anytime, and at any age since peacebuilding journeys can occur when you least expect.

For refugee advocate and Fugee school founder Deborah Henry, her journey began in childhood. "I remember sitting with my granddad and asking: *Why do people suffer? Why is it that there is suffering and poverty when the world has so much? Do other people not see the wars and pain? How can we not help?*" She remarked in Episode 16: *Perhaps very simplistic questions, [but these are] questions we still ask today yet don't have the right answers.*

Ambassador Artauli Taubing also shared her own peacebuilding journey and how she came into her own despite her initial inexperience in the field. *To be honest with you*, she said, speaking on becoming the Indonesian representative to the AIPR governing council in Episode 1, *I was never a mediator nor a negotiator, but I felt that I had a passion for peace.*

Platforms for talking about peace then, should not be confined to academic circles but made accessible to people and communities as well as used to create peacebuilders. *If there are people who would be in the best position to resolve conflict and prevent conflict, it would be our Southeast Asian brothers and sisters*, said Dr Ayesah Uy Abubakar, a lecturer in International Relations at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

The voices of women, in particular, ought to be amplified in peace processes. For women, peace is an everyday concern that goes beyond conflict situations. Dr Arifah Rahmawati, member of Aisyiyah and principal researcher of Indonesia's 6-year gender, conflict and peacebuilding project, argued in Episode 53 that there is no post-conflict situation for women. She stated that: *even when the fighting and war ends, the violence against women is still there. Feminists will reject the post-conflict stance because in their daily life, they continue to struggle against violence.*

Anthropologist Dr. Amporn Marddent, while describing the situation in the deep south of Thailand, proposed in Episode 14: *to advocate for the expansion of the security framework, we should include security in the parameters of everyday life. It's challenging as well, so it needs a huge rekindling and new understanding of the notion of security in matters of gender and daily life.*

The road ahead is daunting, but there is cause for optimism. *ASEAN does care about women empowerment*, said Ambassador Artauli Taubing. *Women have always been victims of conflict—whether it's war or a household conflict. But through AWPR, we will gain a bigger role for women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.*

Building an ASEAN community

Communities can be built and strengthened via podcasts, says host Amina Rasul-Bernardo. Podcasting gives a voice to the voiceless while amplifying important conversations on issues that need to be addressed such as women in peace.

The dramatic growth of the *She Talks Peace* community is a testament to this. In the first month of airing, the podcast was heard mostly in the Philippines, with some listeners in the United States, Canada, and Malaysia. In ASEAN, the podcast has reached Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar. Globally, the podcast has proudly reached 83 countries as of September 2022. Still true to its roots, however, 75 per cent of listeners are from the Philippines.

Join the community

New episodes of *She Talks Peace* are released every Sunday (GMT+8), but listeners can tune in to any episode at any time on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and YouTube.

Sign up to be notified about episode releases via email, and keep your eyes peeled for social media pages launching soon!