WORKING PAPER SERIES ON PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
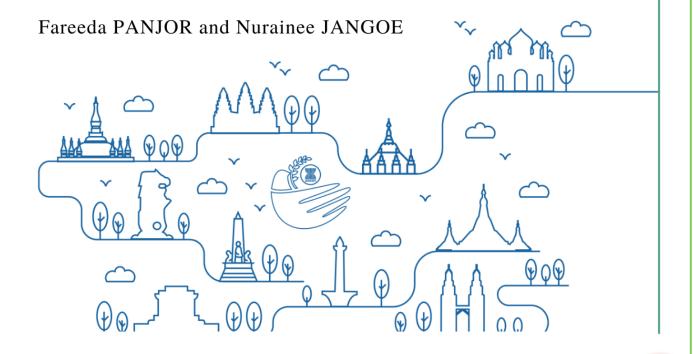
Local Women and Peacebuilding in Thailand's Deep South: Perspectives from the Peace Survey

Fareeda PANJOR and Nurainee JANGOE

ISSUE: 2021 - NO. 04

Local Women and Peacebuilding in Thailand's Deep South: Perspectives from the Peace Survey

AUTHOR

Fareeda Panjor

Researcher and Lecturer, Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, Institute for Peace Studies, Prince of Songkla University

Nurainee Jangoe

Assistant Researcher, Deep South Watch

EDITOR

Dr. Amporn Marddent

WORKING PAPER SERIES ON PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Local Women and Peacebuilding in Thailand's Deep South:

Perspectives from the Peace Survey

Fareeda Panjor [1]

Nurainee Jangoe [2]

Abstract

Thailand's Deep South, which comprises Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and four districts of Songkla Province has experienced violent political conflict, which has resulted in 20,692 casualties since 2004. Men have mainly been the victims of direct violence that includes shootings, bombings, and ambushes. Although women make up only 10% of those impacted by physical violence, they are primarily responsible for taking care of the family and so are disproportionately impacted by the indirect consequences of violence. The term "peace-building" encompasses efforts to end violent conflict through peace talks or negotiations. It also refers to the many efforts to bring peace at the community level. In this context, local women have played a prominent peace-building role and it is important to understand their perspectives as a distinct stakeholder group in peace-building efforts.

This paper unpacks the quantitative data contained in the Peace Surveys of 2016 to 2020 to spotlight the opinions of local women from a total sample of 7,958 respondents. The Peace Survey is a general opinion survey exploring local perspectives on conflict, peace-building, and the peace process. It is an initiative of 24 academic and civil society groups in Thailand's Deep South.

The Peace Surveys highlight that it is not only women in civil society groups that actively support the peace process. This knowledge can be beneficial for developing future peace-building interventions. It also helps shed light on the topic of gender and peace-building in this region.

Keywords: Local women, Peace-Building, Peace Survey, Thailand's Deep South

---

[1] Researcher and Lecturer, Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, Institute for Peace Studies, Prince of Songkla University (Author)

[2] Assistant Researcher, Deep South Watch (Co-author)

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Introduction

From January 2004 to September 2020, the conflict in Thailand's Deep South has resulted in 20,692 incidents, 7,162 deaths and 13,348 injured. Although women make up only 9.1% of deaths and 18.52% of injured,[3] they have been affected by the enforcement of Martial Law, imposed in 2004, and the Emergency Decree, imposed in 2005. These special laws provide security officials with wide-ranging powers to facilitate investigation of suspected insurgents. Military officers have conducted home visits to collect DNA from women and children. Female relatives or wives of suspected insurgents have also been detained and accused of supporting insurgent operations or of assisting their husbands or brothers to flee.[4]

Studies have shown that including a gender perspective in conflict can highlight gendered inequalities in the context of conflict and post-conflict reconstructions. Women, men, and children experience and respond to violence differently. To address

the gendered consequences of conflict, the broad spectrum of women's roles should be understood to identify the most suitable policy responses.[5] Women's assistance in the context of intra-state conflict has ranged from providing medical care or ensuring that basic needs of food or shelter are met. Yet, armed conflict obstructs and impairs social structures and economic capabilities. This can disproportionately affect women because existing norms/traditions may already infringe on the rights and independence of women.[6]

Galtung has argued that women's involvement in peace processes can lead to better and more durable solutions[7]. However, women's inclusion in peace-building efforts remain low. From 1992 to 2011, women made up 9% of negotiators, 2.4% of chief mediators, 3.7% of observers, and 4% of signatories. Out of 585 peace agreements that were signed between 1990 and 2010, only 16% made direct reference to gender or women.[8]

In Thailand's Deep South peace process, women have held far more informal roles than formal ones.[9] One reason for this is the lack of empirical knowledge regarding the roles women can

[3]Deep South Watch Database. *Incidents in Southern Thailand from January 2004 - September 2020.* Pattani, February 2021.

[4]Anchana Heemmina. *Report on Eliminating Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*. Pattani: Duayjai Group, 2020. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/Submissions/CSOs/62.the-duayjai-group.docx

[5]Christian Dietrich and Clodagh Quain. *Gender in Conflict.* European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2014.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Johan Galtung. *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization.* London: SAGE Publications.1996: 271.

[8]Pablo Castillo Diaz and Simon Tordjman, *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence.* United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2012. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/03AWomenPeaceNeg.pdf

[9]Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij. *Women and the Peace Process in the Deep South of Thailand*. Bangkok: Peace Resource Collaborative, 2018:18.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

play[10] even though women do, for example, display characteristics of a good negotiator.[11] Women may also be "natural peace-builders" as in the cases of Sri Lanka, the Middle East and Kashmir.[12] In Thailand's Deep South, women engage in community peace-building through work on rehabilitation, human rights, and quality of life promotion.[13] It is important to discuss how women's roles vary across ethno-religious divides as these socio-cultural differences have implications for government policy.

A survey on southern women's attitudes conducted in 1993 titled "Women in Rural Southern Thailand: A Study of Roles, Attitudes, and Ethno-Religious Differences" found that rural women perceived themselves as having an important role in earning family income and a dominant role in the management of family finances. It found that Malay-Muslim women were more likely to be employed outside the agriculture sector, for example, in petty trading. The authors suggested this may have been related to an

increase in economic pressures on Malay-Muslim households. On the question of political participation, respondents rated their participation in five different kinds of political activity. Although voting was rated highly, aspirations to take local office were low. While women rated all their roles as important, childcare and guidance were ranked highest. Income earner and household financial manager were also rated highly. Women reserved their lowest rating for community activities. This suggests that (political) leadership roles in the village were reserved for men with women instead seeking out and focusing on economic roles.[14]

When violence resumed in 2004, women were initially portrayed only as victims. In particular, the conflict exposed women to discrimination and sexual violence. However, many studies have sought to move away from the victim narrative and have shown how women have adopted more social roles around reconciliation or peace-building. This study aims to shed light on the beliefs that local women have around conflict and peace-building.

Over the past 17 years, many stakeholders have attempted to tackle the

---

[10]Cate Buchanan, Thania Paffenholz, Antonia P. Prentice. *Fresh Insights on the Quantity and Quality of Women's Inclusion in Peace Processes: Expert Views on Findings from the "Broadening Participation" and "Civil Society and Peacebuilding" Projects.* CMI, 2014. https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/GenderPolicyBrief.pdf

[11]Lilian Auma Owuor. *The Role of Women in Peacebuilding: A Case Study of Molo Division in Nakuru District.* M.A. Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2007: 22.

[12]Lisa Schirch and Manjrika Sewak. *Women: Using the Gender Lens* in *People Building Peace II:*

Successful Stories of Civil Society. ed. Paul van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, and Juliette Verhoeven. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005: 97.

[13]Soraya Jamjuree. *Heal the Wounds of the Cruel Day with Faith and Care.* Bangkok: Komol Publishing, 2007: 87-90.

[14] Arin Sa-idi, Kuson Nakachart, Srisompob Jitpiromsri, Sunandpattira Nilchang and Dwight Y. King, *Women in Rural, Southern Thailand: A Study of Roles, Attitudes and Ethno-Religious Differences.* Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science, No.1, 1993: 93-94.

Forging and Fostering Peace
**ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation**

conflict. This includes government, civil society organizations (CSOs), and resistance movement groups. All these stakeholders claim that " the answers to solving the conflict rest with the people". The Peace Survey is an attempt to find those answers. It was inspired by Northern Ireland's Peace Polls. Between 1996 and 2008, Dr. Colin John Irwin of Queen's University Belfast led 10 surveys as a means of communicating the public's views to the negotiating parties. It was an example of direct public engagement in peace talks. The Peace Poll contributed to the signing of the 1998 Belfast Agreement following a referendum confirming public support for the agreement.[15]

The Peace Survey is a quantitative research project conducted by 24 academic institutes and CSOs. The project has helped draw out the perspectives of local people on the conflict and on the socio- economic situation. Conducted five times since 2016, each survey applied systematic random sampling across 37 districts in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and four districts of Songkla Province. Random sampling was also applied at each subsequent administrative level across 144 sub-districts, 164 villages and finally, in 1,640 families. One person aged between 18 and 70 from one family was selected as a

respondent. The total number of accumulated samples from the five surveys was 7,953,[16] and of this figure 4,407 were women.[17] Most of the questions across the surveys remained the same. However, the 5th Peace Survey incorporated new questions, which are also discussed in this report.

Since 2013, there have been a total of 1,791 incidents demonstrating a significant decrease in the number of violent incidents. In 2019, there were only 411 incidents.[18] Yet, according to 72.8% of respondents, the situation remains unchanged. One explanation for this may be the persistence of underlying socio-economic and gender problems related to the conflict, issues that tend to get raised only in the limited fora of research reports, panels, and workshops.

Findings

1. General Information

This next section outlines respondent characteristics, which reflect a representative sample of the population.

More than half the respondents (55.4%) were women. The majority of respondents were Muslim (78.1%) and a little over a fifth were Buddhists (21.7%). Around a third of female respondents were aged 41 - 55 years (34.6%). This was followed by the 26 - 40 age bracket (34.4%), the 56 - 70 age bracket (21.2%),

---

[15]Rungrawee Chalermsripinyorat. *Peace Poll: A Comparative Study of Conflict in Northern Ireland and Southern Border Provinces of Thailand.* Bangkok: Peace Resource Collaborative, 2017: 9.

[16]Peace Survey Network. *Survey of People's Opinions on the Peace Process in Thailand's Deep*

South. Pattani: Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, 2017-2020.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Deep South Watch Database. *Incidents in Southern Thailand in 2003*. Pattani, February 2021.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

and lastly the 18 - 25 age bracket (9.8%). Most women identified themselves first and foremost as Muslim (48.6%) followed by Thai (19.7%), Malay (19.6%), Buddhist (8.2%), or Patani (2.4%). Most female respondents use the local Malay dialect (57.8%), followed by the Southern Thai dialect (14.9%), Central Thai (2.9%), standard Malay (1.3%), Chehe (1.5%), or other (0.6%). This differed only slightly to the general information provided by male respondents. Fewer female respondents identified as Thai (19.7%) compared to male respondents (22.4%). Moreover, fewer female respondents spoke Central Thai (2.9%) compared to male respondents (4.0%).

Table 1: Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Women	4,407	55.4
Men	3,546	44.6
No answer	5	0.1
Total	7,958	100

Table 2: Religion

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Muslim	3,434	78.1	2,658	75.5
Buddhist	954	21.7	854	24.2
Christian	2	0	5	0.1
Other	1	0	0	0
Unspecified	4	0.1	5	0.1
Total	4,395	100	3,522	100

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 3: Age Group

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
41-55	1,522	34.6	1,345	38.0
26-40	1,516	34.4	1,102	31.1
56-70	932	21.2	717	20.2
18-25	431	9.8	377	10.6
Total	4,401	100	3,541	100

Table 4: Identification

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Muslim	2,125	48.6	1,607	45.5
Thai	860	19.7	789	22.4
Malay	857	19.6	695	19.7
Buddhist	360	8.2	292	8.3
Patani	104	2.4	80	2.3
Chinese	0	0	3	0.1
Other	33	0.8	35	1.0
No answer	31	0.7	29	0.8
Total	4,370	100	3,530	100

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 5: Language

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Local Malay Dialect	2,534	57.8	2,043	58.1
Southern Thai Dialect	652	14.9	556	15.8
Local Malay mixed with Thai	651	14.8	409	11.6
Southern Thai Dialect mixed with Central Thai	242	5.5	236	6.7
Central Thai	127	2.9	140	4.0
Chehe	67	1.5	55	1.6
Standard Malay	58	1.3	45	1.3
Other Local Dialect	4	0.1	4	0.1
Chinese	0	0	1	0
Other	25	0.6	16	0.5
No answer	26	0.6	14	0.4
Total	4,386	100	3,519	100

Over a third of female respondents selected primary school as their highest level of education (38.6%). This was followed by junior high (19.5%), high school (13.1%), or undergraduate (11.4 %). Some respondents did not complete any level (10.4%), while others attended vocational college (6.6%). A small proportion completed postgraduate education (0.5%).

In terms of religious education, a third of female respondents had not received any formal education in religion (33%). Around a quarter had studied at Tadika[19] (24.0%), followed by Mutawasid[20] (13.6%), Ibtida-i[21] (13.4%), Sanawee[22] (10.4%) and Pondok (2.2%). Less than one percent studied Islam Education at undergraduate level (0.3%), Buddhist Theology (0.4%), or Islamic Education at postgraduate level (0.1%). In

---

[19] Religious early stage school

[20] Primary Islamic Education

[21] Middle Islamic Education

[22] Senior Islamic Education

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

terms of general education, a higher percentage of female respondents compared to male respondents received no education (10.4% vs. 6.1%). However, a higher proportion of female respondents completed undergraduate education (11.4% vs. 6.5%). A similar proportion of men and women did not receive any religious education (35.2% vs. 34.8%) although more female respondents than male respondents received religious education at Ibtida-I, Mutawasid, or Sanawee.

Table 6: Education Levels

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Primary School	1,700	38.6	1.463	41.3
Junior High	859	19.5	762	21.5
High School	575	13.1	576	16.3
Vocational College	290	6.6	280	7.9
Undergraduate	503	11.4	230	6.5
None	456	10.4	216	6.1
Postgraduate	21	0.5	13	0.4
PhD	0	0	1	0
Total	4,404	100	3,541	100

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 7: Religious Education

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
None	1,542	35.2	1,226	34.8
Tadika	1,050	24.0	986	28.0
Primary education (Ibtida-i)	588	13.4	445	12.6
Middle education (Mutawasid)	595	13.6	401	11.4
Senior education (Sanawee)	455	10.4	264	7.5
Pondok	97	2.2	136	3.9
Bachelor's degree	14	0.3	11	0.3
Master's degree	1	0.0	0	0
Buddhist Theology	19	0.4	33	0.9
Other	21	0.5	22	0.6
Total	4,382	100	3,524	100

Regarding occupation, agriculturist accounted for 35% followed by housewife (16.7%), businessperson/employee (8.9%), other (7.5%), unemployed (6.2%), student (2.7%), civil servant (2.6%), security official (0.7%), teacher (2.6%), or religious leader (0.1%). Although housewife was the third most common occupation given by female respondents, more female respondents worked as businessperson/employee compared to male respondents (8.9% vs. 6.1%). There was also a higher proportion of female respondents in the traditionally female-dominated role of teacher (2.6%vs.1.1%).

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 8: Occupation

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Agriculturist	1,541	35.0	1,546	43.7
Service/transportation/construction worker	718	16.3	913	25.8
Housewife	737	16.7	73	2.1
Businessperson/employee	390	8.9	217	6.1
Other	331	7.5	202	5.7
Unemployed	271	6.2	186	5.3
Civil servant	115	2.6	127	3.6
Security Official	32	0.7	114	3.2
Student	117	2.7	74	2.1
Teacher	116	2.6	38	1.1
Religious Teacher (e.g. Ustaz)	28	0.6	27	0.8
Religious leader (e.g. Imam, Bilal, or Monk)	4	0.1	14	0.4
No answer	1	0	4	0.1
Total	4,401	100	3,535	100

In terms of monthly income, most female respondents (39.5%) made between 5,001 - 10,000 baht per month. The second highest group fell into the 3,001 - 5,000-baht range (31.7%), followed by no income (10.1%), 10,001 -20,000 baht (8.8%), 2,001 - 30,000 baht (2.5%), 30,000 – 40,000 baht (1.1%) and other (0.9%). Less than one percent earned more than 50,000 baht (.2%) or between 40,001 – 50,000 baht (0.4%). The most notable difference between male and female respondents was the proportiono of women receiving no income (10.1%) compared to male respondents (5.2%).

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 9: Income Levels

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
5,001-10,000 baht	1,737	39.5	1,706	48.1
3,001-5,000 baht	1,394	31.7	804	22.7
10,001-20,000 baht	389	8.8	553	15.6
No income	444	10.1	184	5.2
Less than 3,000 baht	211	4.8	119	3.4
20,001-30,000 baht	111	2.5	103	2.9
30,001-40,000 baht	47	1.1	44	1.2
40,001-50,000 baht	18	0.4	5	0.1
More than 50,000 baht	9	0.2	11	0.3
Other	38	0.9	14	0.4
No answer	2	0.0	1	0.0
Total	4,400	100	3,544	100

2. Feelings of Safety

In the 5th Peace Survey, respondents ranked how safe they felt doing certain activities (1 = not safe at all, 2 = not safe, 3 = safe, 4 = very safe). On average female respondents felt safest in places of worship (3.25), doing religious and cultural activities (2.99), in a government office (2.94), attending a public panel/seminar (2.69) and lastly, the market (2.58). On average female respondents felt the least safe to freely express their opinion, either by expressing support for (1.73) or criticizing Patani insurgents (1.73) or criticizing the government (1.94). Both male and female respondents ranked much the same set of activities as prompting feelings of safety or otherwise. However, male respondents had a slightly higher average score across all activities. Respondents generally agreed that criticizing either the government or Patani insurgents was not safe.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 10: Feelings of Safety (Women)

Top ranked activities	Average score	Lowest ranked activities	Average score
Being in a place of worship	3.25	Criticizing government	1.94
Doing religious and cultural activities	2.99	Criticizing Patani insurgents	1.73
Being in a government office	2.94	Expressing support for Patani insurgents	1.73
Attending a public panel/seminar	2.69		
Going to the market	2.58		

Table 11: Feelings of Safety (Men)

Top ranked activities	Average score	Lowest ranked activities	Average score
Being in a place of worship	3.29	Criticizing government	2.10
Participating in religious and cultural activities	3.07	Criticizing Patani insurgents	1.85
Being in a government office	3.04	Expressing support for Patani insurgents	1.80
Participating in a public panel/seminar	2.84		
Going to the market	2.72		

Disaggregating between Muslim and Buddhist female respondents, it was interesting to note that both Muslim and Buddhist women felt safest in a place of worship, doing religious or cultural activities, or at a government office.

However, Buddhist women also said they felt safe passing through a checkpoint and being visited by officials at home. By contrast, Muslim women ranked attending a public panel/seminar or going to the market as safer activities.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 12: Feelings of Safety (Muslim Women)

Top ranked activities	Average score	Lowest ranked activities	Average score
Being in a place of worship	3.26	Criticizing government	1.85
Doing religious and cultural activities	2.90	Criticizing Patani insurgents	1.75
Being in a government office	2.88	Expressing support for Patani insurgents	1.74
Attending a public panel/seminar	2.68		
Being in a market	2.66		

Table 13: Feelings of Safety (Buddhist Women)

Top ranked activities	Average Score	Lowest ranked activities	Average Score
Being in a place of worship	3.22	Meeting and talking with strangers	2.17
Doing religious and cultural activities	3.22	Criticizing Patani insurgents	1.71
Being in a government office	3.10	Expressing support for Patani insurgents	1.68
Passing through a checkpoint	2.84		
Being visited by officials at home	2.82		

3. Role of Women in Peace-Building

In the 5th Peace Survey, respondents were asked to identify what they thought were the most important roles women should play in the peace process. Respondents answered; career/income support and social development (78.8%); human rights protection of women, children, and youth (74.0%); rehabilitation and victim support (66.7%); environmental and natural resource protection (65.3%); and peace knowledge dissemination (64.7%). Opinions on the role of women were ranked similarly across gender and religion. Respondents broadly agreed that women should focus primarily on career/income support as well as human rights protection of women, children and youth.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 14: Role of Women in Peacebuilding

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Career/income support and social development	698	78.8	567	75.5
Human rights protection of women, children, and youth	655	74.0	531	70.7
Rehabilitation and victim support	591	66.7	479	63.8
Environment and natural resource protection	578	65.3	467	62.2
Peace knowledge dissemination	574	64.7	468	62.3

Table 15: Role of Women in Peacebuilding

	Women			
	Muslim		Buddhist	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Career/income support and social development	476	73.8	216	92.3
Human rights protection of women, children, and youth	445	69.0	204	87.2
Rehabilitation and victim support	385	59.7	201	85.9
Environment and natural resource protection	380	58.9	192	82.1
Peace knowledge dissemination	392	60.8	177	75.6

4. Opinion on Peace Talks

In the 5th Peace Survey, respondents were asked to share their opinions of the peace talk process. Nearly half the female respondents felt the conflict had not changed (48.1%). A little over a quarter felt the situation had worsened (26.7%) while less than a fifth felt the situation had improved (17.3%). Nearly half the female respondents had heard about the peace talks (48.5%) and a smaller proportion actively followed news about the peace talks (35.8%). A little over half of female respondents expressed support for peace talks as a way to solve conflict (52.7%). However, a large proportion

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

expressed no confidence (39.8%) or little confidence that peace talks would have any impact (27.9%). Roughly a third of respondents chose not to answer (5.2%) or did not know (27.1%).

Table 16: Opinion on the Conflict

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Worse	237	26.7	167	22.2
Unchanged	426	48.1	363	48.3
Better	154	17.3	145	19.3

Table 17: Media Reports on the Conflict

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Have not heard	374	42.2	259	34.5
Heard	430	48.5	427	56.9
No answer	82	9.3	65	8.7

Table 18: Interest in Peace Talks

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not interested	462	52.1	352	46.9
Interested	317	35.8	309	41.1
No answer	107	12.1	90	12.0

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 19: Confidence in Peace Talks

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No confidence	353	39.8	338	45.0
Confidence	248	27.9	214	28.5
Don't know	240	27.1	161	21.4
No answer	45	5.2	38	5.1

Table 20: Support for Peace Talks to Solve Conflict

	Gender			
	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not supportive	78	8.8	64	8.5
Supportive	467	52.7	435	57.9
Unsure	193	21.8	152	20.2
No answer	148	16.7	100	13.4

It was interesting to see more Buddhist female respondents had heard about the peace talks (56.4% vs. 46%), were interested to follow news about peace talks (50% vs. 30.8%) and were generally more supportive of the process (63.2% vs. 49.1%). Yet, more Buddhist female respondents (47.9% vs. 37.2%) lacked confidence that peace talks would have a positive impact compared to their Muslim counterparts.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 21: Opinion on the Conflict

| | Women | | | |
| | Muslim | | Buddhist | |
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Worse	171	26.5	65	27.8
Unchanged	299	46.0	122	52.1
Better	112	17.4	41	17.5

Table 22: Media Reports on the Conflict

| | Women | | | |
| | Muslim | | Buddhist | |
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Have not heard	282	43.7	86	36.8
Have heard	297	46.0	132	56.4
No answer	66	10.3	16	6.8

Table 23: Interest in Peace Talks

| | Women | | | |
| | Muslim | | Buddhist | |
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not interested	357	55.3	99	42.4
Interested	199	30.8	117	50.0
No answer	89	13.8	18	7.6

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 24: Support for Peace Talks to Solve Conflict

	Women			
	Muslim		Buddhist	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not supportive	56	8.7	22	9.4
Supportive	317	49.1	148	63.2
Unsure	154	23.9	37	15.8
No answer	118	18.3	27	11.6

Table 25: Confidence in Peace Talks

	Women			
	Muslim		Buddhist	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No confidence	240	37.2	112	47.9
Confidence	175	27.2	72	30.7
Don't know	197	30.5	38	16.2
No answer	33	5.1	12	5.2

5. Human Rights Violations

Findings suggest that the experience of human rights violations differ across gender and religion. Muslim female respondents highlighted: hijabs prohibited in Buddhist schools (88.1%); counter-insurgency operations, especially village cordon and searches (84.1%); torture in detention (82.1%); being photographed at checkpoints (79.4%); collection of personal data (75.7%).

Buddhist female respondents cited: university quotas and scholarships for Muslims (76.7%); no Buddhist food in hospitals (58%); other types of human rights violation (50%); state officials shot by insurgents (44.5%); bombing deaths (40.6%).

Male respondents identified the following experiences: banning public

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

panels (51.6%), insurgent warnings against participation in public hearings (51.6%), and being photographed at checkpoints (48.2%).

Table 26: Human Rights Violations (Women)

	Frequency	Percent
Hijabs prohibited in Buddhist schools	186	59.2
Collecting personal data	191	57.2
No Buddhist food in hospitals	113	56.8
Bombing deaths	342	56.2
Insurgents shot during clashes with security forces	123	55.7

Table 27: Human Rights Violations (Muslim Women)

	Frequency	Percent
Hijabs prohibited in Buddhist schools	163	88.1
Counterinsurgency operations in villages	221	84.4
Torture in detention	372	82.1
Being photographed at checkpoints	216	79.4
Collecting personal data	143	75.7

Table 28: Human Rights Violations (Buddhist Women)

	Frequency	Percent
University quotas and scholarships for Muslims	46	76.7
No Buddhist food in hospitals	65	58
Other types	2	50.0
State officials shot by insurgents	53	44.5
Bombing deaths	138	40.6

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

Table 29: Human Rights Violations (Men)

	Frequency	Percent
State officials banning public panels	111	51.6
Insurgent warnings against participation in public hearings	48	51.6
Being photographed at checkpoints	255	48.2
Torture in detention	419	47.9
Counterinsurgency operations in villages	221	45.5

6. Concerns about the Peace Talks

Female respondents' top concerns about the peace process were that they would not end violence (61.0%); that violence would increase (59.6%); conflict parties do not respect the agreement (57.4%); conflict parties refuse to listen to each other (52.3%); conflict parties do not show each other respect (51.8%). These concerns were similar for all respondents' groups.

Table 30: Concerns about the Peace Talks

	Women	Men	Muslim women	Buddhist women
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Peace talks do not end violence	61.0	63.7	59.3	66.6
Violence increases	59.6	61.2	58.6	62.9
Conflict parties do not respect the agreement	57.4	60.7	55.9	62.5
Conflict parties do not listen to each other	52.3	55.6	51.6	54.8
Conflict parties do not show each other respect	51.8	54.8	51.2	53.9

7. Local Governance Reform

Local government reform rooted in local participation is one solution the government should consider. A little over a quarter of female respondents opted for special decentralization under Thai law

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

(16.5%). A little over a quarter preferred decentralization similar to other parts of the country (16.1%). A smaller proportion of respondents chose to maintain the status quo (12.8%) and less than ten percent chose independence (8.7%). However, 21% stated that they could not accept the region

becoming independent. About a third preferred not to answer (30.1%). A larger proportion responded with "don't know" highlighting the question's sensitivity. There were only small differences in answers across gender. When comparing across religion, Buddhist female respondents chose decentralization that was similar to other parts of the country as their preferred option.

Table 31: Local Governance Reform (Women)

		Decline	Accept	Don't know/No answer
No change in governance	Frequency	351	563	1158
	Percent	8.0	12.8	26.3
Decentralization as in other parts of the country	Frequency	237	708	1,437
	Percent	5.4	16.1	32.6
Special decentralization under Thai law	Frequency	284	726	1,513
	Percent	6.4	16.5	34.3
Independence	Frequency	923	379	1,756
	Percent	21	8.7	39.8

Table 32: Local Governance Reform (Men)

		Decline	Accept	Don't know/No answer
No change in governance	Frequency	288	470	840
	Percent	8.1	13.3	23.7
Decentralization as in other parts of the country	Frequency	189	684	982
	Percent	5.3	19.3	27.7
Special decentralization under Thai law	Frequency	238	684	1,041
	Percent	6.7	19.3	29.3
Independence	Frequency	775	317	1,334
	Percent	21.9	8.9	37.7

Table 33: Local Governance Reform (Muslim Women)

		Decline	Accept	Don't know/No answer
No change in governance	Frequency	255	410	937
	Percent	7.4	11.9	27.3
Decentralization as in other parts of the country	Frequency	161	529	1,170
	Percent	4.7	15.4	34
Special decentralization under Thai law	Frequency	186	552	1,231
	Percent	5.4	16.1	35.8
Independence	Frequency	592	292	1,466
	Percent	17.2	8.5	42.7

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 34: Local Governance Reform (Buddhist Women)

		Decline	Accept	Don't know/No answer
No change in governance	Frequency	92	148	217
	Percent	9.6	15.5	22.7
Decentralization as in other parts of the country	Frequency	73	176	261
	Percent	7.7	18.4	27.4
Special decentralization under Thai law	Frequency	96	171	275
	Percent	10.1	17.9	28.8
Independence	Frequency	327	85	283
	Percent	34.3	8.9	29.7

8. Conflict Resolution Measures

Respondents were asked to rank measures according to what they considered most urgent. The answers were as follows; create a safe space in communities (3.61); avoid violence against soft targets (i.e. civilians) (3.49); form a human rights fact-finding committee (3.42); guarantee safe passage of persons involved in peace talks (3.35); protect human rights (3.31).

When disaggregating female respondents according to religion, Muslim respondents' most urgent measures included "demilitarization" and "no scapegoating/ report progress of talks to the public".

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 35: Top 5 Urgent Measures (Women)

(1=not urgent at all, 2=not urgent, 3=urgent,4=very urgent)	Average score
Create a safe space in communities	3.61
Avoid soft targets (i.e. civilians)	3.49
Form human rights fact-finding committee	3.42
Guarantee safe passage of persons involved in peace talks	3.35
Human rights protection	3.31

Table 36: Top 5 Urgent Measures (Men)

	Average score
Create a safe space in communities	3.44
Avoid soft targets (i.e. civilians)	3.35
Human rights protection	3.23
Form human rights fact-finding committee	3.12
Guarantee safe passage of persons involved in peace talks	3.03

Table 37: Top 5 Urgent Measures (Muslim Women)

	Average score
Create a safe space in communities	3.43
Avoid soft targets (i.e. civilians)	3.34
Do not scapegoat/report progress of talks to the public	3.33
Human rights protection	3.18
Demilitarization	3.13

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 38: Top 5 Urgent Measures (Buddhist Women)

	Average score
Create a safe space in communities	3.47
Avoid soft targets (i.e. civilians)	3.41
Human rights protection	3.10
Form human rights fact-finding committee	3.04
Guarantee safe passage of persons involved in peace talks	2.96

When asked to rank the top five measures that could solve the problem in the long term, female respondents replied: career and income support (75.5%); address the drug problem (73.0%); deal with organised crime (39.1%); improve education and contextualize it to local needs (38.3%) and; offer remedies to affected parties without discrimination (31.8%). Buddhist women also ranked a strong military response as one of their top five measures (47.0%) while male respondents included promoting local identities, languages, and culture (35.6%).

Table 40: Top 5 Solutions (Women)

	Frequency	Percent
Career and income support	669	75.5
Address the drug problem	647	73.0
Deal with organised crime	346	39.1
Improve education and contextualize it to local needs	339	38.3
Offer remedies to affected parties without discrimination	282	31.8

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Table 41: Top 5 Solutions (Men)

	Frequency	Percent
Address the drug problem	555	73.9
Career and income support	541	72.0
Improve education and contextualize it to local needs	291	38.7
Deal with organised crime	283	37.7
Promote local identities, languages, and cultures	267	35.6

Table 42: Top 5 Solutions (Muslim Women)

	Frequency	Percent
Career and income support	487	75.5
Address the drug problem	461	71.5
Improve education and contextualize it to local needs	258	40.0
Deal with organised crime	234	36.3
Offer remedies to affected parties without discrimination	202	31.3

Table 42: Top 5 Solutions (Buddhist Women)

	Frequency	Percent
Address the drug problem	181	77.4
Career and income support	175	74.8
Strong military response	110	47.0
Deal with organised crime	107	45.7
Improve education and contextualize it to local needs	80	34.2

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Discussion

The demographic information highlights a variety of differences between male and female respondents as well as among female respondents. Findings showed that almost half of female respondents (48.6%) identified as Muslim first and foremost. Labels that followed were Thai, Malay, Buddhist, Patani and other. The demographic results also indicated that a variety of languages were spoken with 57.8% speaking the local Malay dialect, followed by the Southern Thai dialect, Central Thai, and others. There seemed to be a broad consensus in terms of education level and occupation. Although most female respondents completed primary school, a high proportion did not receive any education compared to men. However, more women completed undergraduate level or had a higher level of religious education. Nevertheless, the proportion of respondents that were either housewives or unemployed was high (16.7%, 6.2% respectively) and income remained low with 39.5% earning between 5,001 and10, 000 baht per month.

Early on in the conflict, women were seen more as victims. However, studies have shown the diverse roles that women adopt during conflict, particularly

with respect to peace-building. Skills that women can employ as peace-builders include active listening, understanding, expressing empathy with marginal viewpoints, and telling stories rather than making statements.[23] In the Deep South, women CSOs have conducted home visits and collaborated with government to establish a compensation and rehabilitation commission.[24] However, in the ongoing formal peace process, women play no such distinctive role because their meaningful participation is wedged between the state's top-down agenda and the hierarchy of local social norms that marginalize women.[25]

When asked about the main peace-building roles that women play, respondents ranked career and income support and social development highest (78.8%). This was followed by human rights protection of children, youth, and women (73.9%), rehabilitation and victim support (66.7%), environmental and natural resource protection (65.3%), and disseminating peace knowledge (64.3%). These responses suggest there are many supporting roles that respondents expect women to adopt.

In terms of news, 48.5% of female respondents said they followed news about the peace talks. However, 26.7% felt the situation was getting worse. That said, both Muslim and Buddhist women expressed support for peace talks as a way to solve the conflict (52.7%) despite a large proportion

---

[23] Francesca Polletta and PCB Chen. *Gender and Public Talk: Accounting for Women's Variable Participation in the Public Sphere*. Sociological Theory, Vol 3, No.4. 2013: 305.

[24] Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij. *Women and the Peace Process in the Deep South of Thailand*.

Bangkok: Peace Resource Collaborative, 2018: 35-37.

[25] Amporn Marddent. *Religious Discourse and Gender in Southern Thailand*. Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies, Vol 12, No 2. 2019: 243.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation

lacking confidence in the process. On governance, 6.5% of female respondents expressed a preference for special decentralization under Thai law. This was followed by decentralization as in other parts of the country (16.1%). Long term solutions included; creating a safe space in communities, avoiding violence against soft targets (i.e. civilian) as well as career and income support (75.5%). Addressing the drug problem was also ranked highly (73.0%), as was dealing with influential groups and organised crime (39.1%).

Differences in opinion across religion highlight the challenges that will need to be dealt with in the event that formal talks lead to an agreement. In particular, different perceptions with respect to human rights violations are indicative of the grievances that Buddhists and Muslims have. Muslim respondents highlighted prohibiting the wearing of the hijab in Buddhist schools. Meanwhile, Buddhist respondents highlighted university quotas and scholarships for Muslims. By contrast, male respondents raised the issue of government restrictions on public panels.

Research from other conflict-affected contexts such as Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sierra Leone, shows women as active agents of peace at the local level, but without recognition from governments, community members, and

often the women themselves.[26] Further, their valuable peace-building experience in the private sphere and local community has not translated into participation in national and international processes. These lost opportunities infringe women's right to participate in decisions affecting their lives, and lead to a peace that does not meet the whole community's needs, thus risking a return to conflict.[27] Studies show that women's understanding of peace tends to start at the family and community level, and includes issues relevant to the private sphere, for example, peace within the household, education of children, and the attainment of individual rights and freedom.[28]

How can women build lasting peace, taking into consideration gender relations and ethno-religious diversity? Empirical data and understanding of how local women act as agents for peace help create an environment conducive to women's participation in peace-building. In the Deep South, women have started to be recognized as key actors at the policy level. Deep South administrative policy between 2017 and 2019 emphasizes the involvement of women and youth in decision-making at all levels. Recently, Executive Order 230/2557 was issued as an umbrella policy to moderate the recommendations of all participating women.

There have also been local efforts to establish a mechanism to involve grassroots women's organization in a collaboration

---

[26] Dinesh Kumar Singh. *Women, Security, Peace and Conflict in Southeast Asia.* Indian Journal of Political Science, 71, 2, April-June 2010: 651-661.

[27] Zohra Moosa, Maryam Rahmani, and Lee Webster. *From the Private to the Public Sphere:*

New Research on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding. Gender and Development, 21, 3. 2013: 453-472.

[28] Ibid.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

between UN Woman, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRCT), the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. This collaboration aims to incorporate UNSCR1325 into domestic activities.[29] With this collaboration, there is a window of opportunity that could contribute to greater participation on the part of local women with respect to peace processes and peace-building in general.

Conclusion

The Peace Survey is instrumental for understanding Deep South people's opinions on conflict, peace-building and the peace process. Women's voices matter, and this study specifically draws out their perspective. This study can contribute to gender mainstreaming processes in peace-building and to the promotion of international mechanisms on women, peace, and security. Data shows that local women may not only take responsibility as household heads but also taking up roles related to community protection, economic survival and peace-building in public spaces. However, women's inclusion in peace dialogues remain a significant lacuna. Gender-sensitive information should be communicated to stakeholders. In this context, the political, social, and economic marginalization of women in Thailand's Deep South should be addressed through a special women's agenda that allows for coordination on these cross-cutting issues, and that creates avenues for innovative solutions.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

References

Buchanan, Cate, Paffenholz, Thania, and Prentice, Antonia P. *Fresh Insights on the Quantity and Quality of Women's Inclusion in Peace Processes: Expert View on Findings from the "Broadening Participation" and "Civil Society and Peacebuilding" Projects*. CMI, 2014. https://www.inclusivepeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/briefing-note-quality-quantity-women-inclusion-peace-processes-en.pdf

Buranajaroenkij, Duanghathai. *Women and the Peace Process in the Deep South of Thailand*. Bangkok: Peace Resource Collaborative, 2018

Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, Prince of Songkla University. *Men and Youth in Thailand's Conflict-Affected Deep South*. Pattani: Prince of Songkla University, 2015.

Chalermsripinyorat, Rungrawee. *Peace Poll: A Comparative Study of Conflict in Northern Ireland and Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*. Bangkok: Peace Resource Collaborative, 2017.

Deep South Watch Database. *Incidents in Southern Thailand from January 2004- September 2020*. Pattani, February 2021.

Deep South Watch Database. *Incidents in Southern Thailand in 2003*. Pattani, February 2021.

Diaz, Pablo, C., and Tordjman, Simon. *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2012.

Dietrich, Christian and Quain, Clodagh. *Gender in Conflict*. European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2014. https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_33_Gender_in_conflict.pdf

Galtung, Johan. *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London: SAGE Publications, 1996.

Heemmina, Anchana. *Report on Eliminating Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*. Duayjai Group Human Rights Report, Pattani, 2020.

Jamjuree, Soraya. Heal the Wounds of the Cruel Day with Faith and Care. Bangkok: Komol Publishing, 2007: 87-90.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

Marddent, Amporn. Religious. *Discourse and Gender in Southern Thailand.* Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies, Vol. 12 No. 2, 2019: 255-247.

Moosa, Zohra, Rahmani, Maryam, and Webster, Lee. *From the Private to the Public Sphere: New Research on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding*. Gender and Development, Vol.21, No.3, 2013: 453-472.

Peace Survey Network. S*urvey of People's Opinions on the Peace Process in Thailand's Deep South.* Pattani. Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, 2017-2020.

Polletta, Francesca and Chen, PCB. *Gender and Public Talk: Accounting for Women's Variable Participation in the Public*. Sociological Theory Vol.31, No.4, 2013: 291-317.

Owuor, Lilian Auma. *The Role of Woman in Peacebuilding: A Case Study of Molo Division in Nakulu District*. M.A. Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2007.

Saidi, Arin, Nakachart, Kuson, Jitpiromsri, Srisompop, Nilchan, Sunandpattira, and King, Dwight. *Women in Rural, Southern Thailand: A Study of Roles, Attitudes and Ethno-Religious Differences*. Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1993: 93-94.

Schirch, Lisa and Manjrika Sewak. *Women: Using the Gender Lens* in *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society*, edited by Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, Juliette Verhoeven, and Paul van Tongeren. Boulder: CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005.

Singh, Dinesh K. *Women, Security, Peace and Conflict in Southeast Asia*. The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol.71, No.2, April-June 2010: 651-661.

Forging and Fostering Peace
ASEAN Institute for
Peace and Reconciliation

JLN. SISINGAMANGARAJA NO. 73, KEBAYORAN BARU, JAKARTA SELATAN 12120, INDONESIA

ASEAN_IPR

ASEAN_IPR

ASEAN INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

ASEAN INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

ASEAN IPR