



# APFSD Youth Call to Action 2021: Southeast Asia



Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam

## INTRODUCTION

In the discussion on the impact of Covid-19 in our countries, we noted that the pandemic has worsened the situation for persons with disabilities experiencing exclusion in all facets of their lives, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. The pandemic has exacerbated their experiences of isolation and exclusion due to the digital divide as barriers created through limited technological access and digital literacy prevents them from benefiting from the digitisation of essential information and services.

Secondly, we noted that SDGs, despite being a useful tool, is distant from the ground realities as implementation of SDGs have a number of shortcomings. For instance, health and SRHR related conversations and initiatives still excludes non-binary and marginalized groups such as LBQ women.

Thirdly, for other SDGs, including the one on climate change, cross regional coordination through sharing of data on climate change, health and geopolitical human rights are needed in the region.

In conclusion, SDG implementation in each of the countries in the region lack an inclusive, participatory and intersectional approach that continues to exclude young people including those with disabilities, those belonging to other sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, characteristics and expression and also those belonging to various minority groups. In the long run, this leads to major concerns of young people from going unaddressed, particularly issues related to access to equal opportunities, decent work, mental health and other concerns relevant to the overall well-being of the youth.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We urge the States to take the following steps:

- Importance of adopting an intersectional lens, where no one is left behind from digitalisation. Provide training and build the culture of cyber communication among the users; Enrich the access of internet to vulnerable communities. While digital solutions are being created, ensure that capacity-building is provided to close the gap between diverse youth groups, such that all have equitable access to any solutions that are being implemented.
- Raise the mental health awareness among people: via training, communication. Build the practice group of mental health issues prevention. Include youth friendly services for mental health, SRHR and key population on the universal health coverage policy of government for increase accessibility of services. Create local based mental health support group such as 'friendship benches' in region to tackle mental health problem widely in the region.
- Improve educational accessibility and creating job opportunity for the population. Develop easy-read resources to improve accessibility of information. Ensure disability-sensitivity training for employers and vocational training service providers.
- Promote innovative climate friendly project led by youth. Promote youth lead innovative eco-friendly tourism.
- Ban coal-based energy plan and strengthen intersectional collaboration to implement circular economy principles pertaining to waste management in daily life. Promote folk/traditional wisdom and local creativities for sustainable consumption and combat the effects of climate change from the community level.
- Ensure that climate education is disability-inclusive - climate change is a difficult concept that is complex and difficult for people with intellectual disabilities to understand.

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1. The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum on March 14-16, 2021. The discussions were facilitated by Phin Savey and Nguyen Thin Ngoc Tien on behalf of the country team. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW team.