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ASEAN
PRIZE



ASEAN Prize Symposium

ASEAN Regional Integration

Journey of the ASEAN Prize Recipients

20 May 2024 | Vientiane, Lao PDR

COMPLETION REPORT





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The ASEAN Prize Symposium 2024

The ASEAN Prize Symposium is a flagship programme aiming to promote the ASEAN Prize and its role in fostering ASEAN Community building. This year, in a joint-collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, Temasek Foundation, and Mekong Institute, the event brought together ASEAN Prize Recipients (APRs) from 2021 to 2023 in a discussion platform to showcase their exemplary contributions and share their journey and aspiration as laureates of the ASEAN Prize.

In the spirit of celebrating the remarkable achievements and dynamic initiatives within the ASEAN community, the event embraced the tagline, "ASEAN Regional Integration – Journey of the ASEAN Prize Recipients", serving as a rallying call to embrace the ASEAN value of community-building and recognize the extraordinary contributions that have earned the ASEAN Prize.

The ASEAN Prize Symposium 2024 highlighted the achievements and advocacies of the APRs, acting as inspirational benchmarks and guiding principles for the targeted audiences, which included professionals, academicians / think tanks, non-profits, business entities, media, and young leaders. This platform encouraged emulation and introspection, allowing participants to draw valuable insights and take stock of the impactful contributions made by the APRs in their respective fields.

Under Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship, the ASEAN Prize Symposium 2024 reached out to individuals and organizations based in Lao PDR. It was also livestreamed via Zoom and Facebook to accommodate a wider range of participants from across AMS, ensuring inclusivity and a broad representation of audiences.

Objectives

The Symposium sought to create heightened awareness of the prestigious ASEAN Prize and facilitate the building of common understanding among ASEAN individuals and entities about their potentials and pivotal roles in shaping a robust regional community. The forum aimed to encourage stakeholders to take on more active and impactful roles in fostering the ASEAN spirit and advancing regional cooperation and integration efforts.



The Organizers



Mekong Institute (MI), jointly owned and governed by GMS countries, is an intergovernmental organization that deepens regional cooperation and integration through capacity development, dialogue, and advocacy for sustainable socioeconomic development in the GMS. MI is committed to becoming a center of excellence in human resource development, a think tank, and a convener for dialogue and collaboration.

MI strives to bring together stakeholders in pushing for development agendas on agriculture, trade and investment, and sustainable energy and environment. To cement holistic and meaningful impacts, MI covers various cross-cutting themes such as social inclusion and vulnerability, digital economy and innovation, and labor mobility.

TEMASEK FOUNDATION

Temasek Foundation (TF), based in Singapore, is a non-profit organization under Temasek Holdings' philanthropic arm. It is dedicated to piloting innovative solutions and advancing capabilities across generations, synergizing strengths to multiply impact within communities, and listening deeply to act for the common good. The Foundation's initiatives are driven by emerging trends in social demographics, geopolitical developments, science, technology, and environmental changes. It focuses on strengthening social resilience, fostering international exchange, enhancing regional capabilities, and advancing science for a sustainable future, aiming to uplift lives and address evolving needs effectively.



The ASEAN Secretariat

The ASEAN Secretariat's (ASEC) basic function is to provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities. It envisions to be the nerve centre of a strong and confident ASEAN Community that is globally respected for acting in full compliance with its Charter and in the best interest of its people.



The Organizing Team

MEKONG INSTITUTE



Anusara Tanpitak
Communications and
Knowledge Management
Manager



Natchaya Potiwat
General Service
Supervisor



Anna Leigh Anillo
Communications and
Knowledge Management
Coordinator



Eastword Manlises
Special Projects Support
Coordinator



Narathip Dahan
IT Officer



Thitipohn Rattanatraisri
Communications
Assistant

ASEAN SECRETARIAT



Lee Yoong Yoong
Director, Community
Affairs Directorate



Fitria Ruthi Maharani
Program Officer,
ASEAN Prize



The ASEAN Prize Recipients



**MR. HAJI MUHAMAD
IQBAL FAKHRI BIN
HAJI DAMIT**

Founder
Hand4Hand Brunei
APR 2022

Iqbal Damit is a youth advocate and community leader from Brunei Darussalam. He has actively promoted inclusive community-based development and intensified regional cooperation towards a resilient ASEAN Community.



**MADAM NGUYEN
THI TUYET MINH**

Founder of WeLead
Founding Member & The First
Chairwoman of ASEAN Women
Entrepreneur Network (AWEN)
APR 2023

Madam Minh is a distinguished figure from Viet Nam championing women's economic advancement. For decades, Madam Minh has advocated for key regional initiatives and provided policy advisory for the region's business ecosystem, aligning with her aspiration to achieve a sustainable economy and an inclusive community.



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**MR. SURIYAN
VICHITLEKARN**

Executive Director
Mekong Institute

Mr. Suriyan, as MI's Executive Director, received the ASEAN Prize in 2021 on behalf of the institute.

As one of the longest running intergovernmental organizations in the GMS, MI is dedicated to building a better subregion focusing on human resource and capacity development to enhance regional cooperation and integration.



Timeline of Activities

Proposal Submission	APRIL 11	
	APRIL 17	Bidding Result Announced
Coordination Meeting with the APRs	MAY 3	
	MAY 6	Coordination Meeting with MOFA Laos
Coordination Meeting with the APRs	14	
	MAY 17	Event Runthrough
Travel to Vientiane, Lao PDR	MAY 19	
	MAY 20	ASEAN Prize Symposium
Debriefing	MAY 31	



Format and Program

The ASEAN Prize Symposium took place on **20 May 2024** at **Crowne Plaza Vientiane Hotel** in Lao PDR. The event aimed to provide a face-to-face platform for interaction with the distinguished **APRs** of **2021, 2022, and 2023**, who served as keynote speakers. A total of 115 participants gathered in Vientiane for the symposium, participating in informative sessions like the ASEAN Prize Talks. During these talks, the APRs shared their remarkable experiences and insights on topics relevant to ASEAN community-building.

The symposium primarily targeted stakeholders in Lao PDR to enhance ASEAN Prize engagement in the country and encourage individuals and organizations to submit nominations. Invited attendees were required to pre-register by filling out an online form. For those not invited, they were encouraged to join the event via Zoom or watch the live stream on Mekong Institute's Facebook Page.



08:30 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 09:03	Greetings and Opening
09:00 - 09:05	ASEAN Anthem
09:05 - 09:25	Welcome Remarks a. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR b. Temasek Foundation c. ASEAN Secretariat
09:25 - 09:40	Introduction to the ASEAN Prize Symposium and ASEAN Prize Overview
09:40 - 09:45	Photo Opportunity
09:45 - 10:00	Refreshment and Networking Break



ASEAN Prize Talk by Recipients - Journey of the ASEAN Prize Recipients

10:00 - 10:20	<p>Youth Leadership and Volunteerism</p> <p>Mr. Haji Muhammad Iqbal Fakhri bin Haji Damit Co Founder Hand4Hand Brunei ASEAN Prize Recipient 2022</p>
10:20 - 10:40	<p>Empowering Women in Socio-Economic Development</p> <p>Madam Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh Founder of WeLead Founding Member, The First Chairwoman of ASEAN Women Entrepreneur Network (AWEN) ASEAN Prize Recipient 2023</p>
10:40 - 11:00	<p>Fostering the Regional Cooperation and Integration</p> <p>Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn Executive Director of the Mekong Institute ASEAN Prize Recipient 2021</p>
11:00 - 11:30	Open Forum and Q&A Session
11:30 - 12:00	Overview of the Breakout Session
12:00 - 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 - 15:00	<p>Break-out Sessions</p> <p>Mekong Institute – ASEAN's Regional Cooperation and Integration</p> <p>Mr. Iqbal Damit – Youth Volunteerism in ASEAN</p> <p>Madam Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh – Women's Socio Economic Empowerment in ASEAN</p>
15:00 - 15:30	Refreshment and Coffee Break
15:30 - 16:00	Wrap-up and Closing Ceremony



Highlights of Proceedings



Opening Ceremony

The Symposium was attended by over 100 participants coming from public, private, and non-profit organizations in Lao PDR and other parts of Southeast Asia. The morning and afternoon plenary sessions were facilitated by **Mr. Phoudthasaichay Yokkhanphone**, an officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR. After a few introductory remarks, Mr. Yokkhanphone invited the participants to the singing of the ASEAN Anthem.

Welcome Remarks

Representing Lao PDR as ASEAN Chair 2024, the Director of Socio-Cultural for ASEAN Community of MOFA Lao PDR, **Mr. Phetthanousone Phommalath**, mentioned that “The forum is a good opportunity for academics, organizations, youth and student organizations and the private sectors to take part in the discussion of the crucial roles in shaping a robust regional community building across multifaceted thematic landscape.” He encouraged all stakeholders, including his fellow citizens to take on more active and impactful roles in fostering the ASEAN spirit and advancing regional cooperation and integration efforts.



Representing Temasek Foundation, **Mr. James Chan**, Senior Director of Programmes, shared that the Temasek Foundation has been supporting the ASEAN Prize since its inception in 2018. To build a people-centric, inclusive and resilient ASEAN, Temasek remains committed to recognizing and honoring outstanding individuals and organizations for their contributions. “We hope the ASEAN Prize will continue to inspire more individuals and organizations to contribute towards ASEAN community building efforts collectively,” said Mr. Chan.

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Lee Yoong Yoong**, Director for Community Affairs Directorate at the ASEAN Secretariat, said that the ASEAN Prize Symposium exemplifies the commitment of stakeholders. “It further demonstrates an enhanced partnership, promoting a more integrated and vibrant ASEAN Community, and more importantly, it resonates with the spirit of achieving the shared goal of ASEAN’s visions,” said Director Lee Yoong Yoong.



The nominee should also share his/her/organisation's **FUTURE PLANS** in continuing the work after winning the Prize.

ASEAN Prize Overview

Director Lee Yoong Yoong provided a comprehensive overview of the ASEAN Prize, a prestigious annual award established in 2018 during Singapore's Chairmanship of ASEAN. Administered by the ASEAN Secretariat and supported by the Temasek Foundation, the award aims to recognize and honor significant contributions toward ASEAN community-building efforts by citizens and organizations within ASEAN Member States (AMS). The ASEAN Prize celebrates individuals and institutions that demonstrate exemplary contributions to ASEAN's regional development, reflecting a strong commitment from the ASEAN Secretariat and AMS to promote regional collaboration and development.

The ASEAN Prize Trophy and a cash prize of USD 20,000 are presented by the ASEAN Chair to the selected recipient during a prominent ASEAN event. This ceremony highlights the recipient's achievements and contributions to the ASEAN community.

Nominees for the ASEAN Prize must meet several criteria, including being a citizen of or an organization based in any AMS and demonstrating contributions to a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN Community. This includes outstanding collaboration between AMSs, ASEAN and the world, people-to-people engagement, economic integration, and other significant contributions to ASEAN community building. Nominees must provide verifiable achievements in promoting intra-ASEAN collaboration, including supporting documentation such as character references, photos, media coverage, and future plans to continue their work after winning the Prize. Self-nominations and posthumous submissions are not considered.





Nominations for the ASEAN Prize are submitted through the National Focal Points in each respective ASEAN Member State, ensuring that each nomination is vetted and endorsed at the national level before being considered for the award. The ASEAN Prize is a testament to the commitment of the ASEAN community to recognize and reward outstanding contributions to regional development. By celebrating these achievements, the Prize aims to inspire further efforts toward building a cohesive, resilient, and integrated ASEAN Community.



ASEAN Prize Talks



APR 2022

**MR. HAJI MUHAMAD IQBAL
FAKHRI BIN HAJI DAMIT**

Founder, Hand4Hand Brunei

While Mr. Iqbal was unable to attend the Symposium due to an emergency situation, he prepared a presentation that was delivered by a member of the ASEAN Prize Symposium Organizing Team. His presentation focused on his journey on implementing youth-led initiatives that helped him earn the prestigious ASEAN Prize. He stressed the importance of not only empowering the youth but also giving them the opportunity to lead. Not only he believes that the youth are the leaders of the future. "They are the current leaders," he said.

Iqbal shared his extensive experience in humanitarian, charity, and youth work across 11 countries, including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and others, impacting approximately 220,000 people. His journey began after participating in the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program (SSEAYP) in 2009, which he described as life-changing.

He outlined six key areas of volunteerism: humanitarian, community, education, environment, animal welfare, and sports. Iqbal emphasized the importance of finding one's passion and collaborating with like-minded individuals to embark on volunteer work, highlighting the significance of enjoying the work to sustain motivation.



He discussed the empowerment of youth through engaging and enjoyable activities, stressing that youth are not just future leaders but current leaders who need opportunities to lead. Effective leadership, according to Iqbal, doesn't require specific skill sets but rather a combination of various useful skills and the ability to adapt to and accept change.

Iqbal shared his belief that self-satisfaction is the greatest reward in volunteering, derived from seeing the positive impact on beneficiaries. Despite facing numerous challenges, particularly from naysayers, he remains steadfast in his mission.

Reflecting on receiving the ASEAN Prize in 2022, he relived the honor of being awarded by Indonesian President Joko Widodo in the presence of ASEAN state leaders. He highlighted the importance of community building and networking within ASEAN, which was bolstered by his award.

Looking ahead, Iqbal aspires to mentor 10 more individuals to continue his work and initiate an ASEAN project involving one million youths. He concluded with a motivational call to action, urging everyone to contribute to making ASEAN a better place.





APR 2022

MADAM NGUYEN THI TUYET MINH

Founder of WeLead
 Founding Member & The First Chairwoman, ASEAN Women
 Entrepreneur Network (AWEN)

During her talk, Madam Minh said that “Receiving the ASEAN Prize is a testament to the power of dedication and perseverance.” Her journey from a small town in Viet Nam to becoming the first Vietnamese recipient of the prestigious award is “a reflection of the incredible potential within each of us”. She hopes that her story would inspire others to pursue their dreams with passion and resilience, believing that no obstacle is too great when driven by a commitment to positive change. She believes that the spirit of the ASEAN Prize should be widely promoted across the ASEAN community to encourage creativity and goodwill, facilitating a sustainable and more people-centered region.

Madam Minh also shared her journey to becoming the ASEAN Prize recipient in 2023. Born in a small town in northern Viet Nam, she grew up questioning why many girls were denied educational opportunities. This question fueled her 40-year quest to improve conditions for women.

Her professional journey began with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), where she worked on projects supporting poor women in starting businesses. One notable project involved creating stable income opportunities for 30 poor women through waste collection and classification, a model that has since been replicated.



Madam Minh's significant achievement was the establishment of the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN). Despite initial hesitations and numerous challenges, including lack of precedent, funding, and language barriers, she persevered. Her efforts culminated in the official launch of AWEN on April 22, 2014, where she served as the first chairwoman.

Throughout her tenure, Madam Minh faced many obstacles, such as securing funding and achieving consensus among ASEAN members. She introduced innovative feedback mechanisms to streamline decision-making and mobilized resources through relentless networking at various regional conferences. Her initiatives, like the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Forum and the Award Ceremony to Honor Outstanding ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs, have become annual events.

Her work with AWEN was recognized with the prestigious ASEAN Prize in 2023, awarded by the Chairman of ASEAN at the 43rd ASEAN Summit in Jakarta. Along with the award, she received a USD 20,000 cash prize, which she used for WeLead activities to further support female entrepreneurs.

Madam Minh concluded her speech by encouraging the audience, particularly young people, to pursue their dreams with passion, determination, and hard work. She emphasized that success is achievable for those who strive diligently, regardless of their background.



MI will continue to serve the
people in the GMS and beyond

COMMITTED, CAPABLE, AND GUIDED
BY THE SPIRIT OF THE GMS



ASEAN
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APR 2021



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MR. SURIYAN VICHITLEKARN
Executive Director

Mekong Institute (MI) Executive Director, Suriyan Vichitlekarn, talked about MI's transformative journey and what it meant for the institute to be awarded with the ASEAN Prize. "Winning the ASEAN Prize in 2021 was a great honour...though MI's real success is seen in the positive impact on the ground, showing that what we do matters to the communities and the people. The work of MI has been a collective effort, and we owe thanks to all who have supported its mission," said Mr. Vichitlekarn.

Sharing MI's journey and achievements as the ASEAN Prize recipient for 2021, Mr. Vichitlekarn emphasized the importance of regional cooperation and community building within ASEAN, stressing that no single country can address challenges alone.

MI was established in 1996, following the Cold War, through a collaboration between the New Zealand Government, the Royal Thai Government, and Khon Kaen University. Initially launched as a development project, MI's first training program aimed to assist Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries in transitioning to a market economy. This program brought together participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, fostering skills development and regional cooperation.





He highlighted the unique connections among GMS nations, emphasizing shared histories, cultures, and traditions that go beyond geographical borders. He noted that MI has evolved from a training center into an intergovernmental organization recognized by a royal decree from the King of Thailand in 2009. Over the past 27 years, MI has focused on capacity-building programs, research, and policy advocacy, empowering member nations to tackle common challenges and celebrate successes together.

MI's efforts have created a network of over 10,000 alumni, many of whom hold significant positions in government, business, and civil society across the GMS. The institute's programs have promoted mutual friendship, understanding, and trust among participants, fostering sustainable prosperity in the region.

Mr. Vichitlekarn also shared a personal anecdote about his time at the ASEAN Secretariat, where he witnessed the power of regional cooperation. This experience underscored the importance of institutions like MI in driving regional development and integration.

Mr. Vichitlekarn expressed pride in MI's achievements and reiterated the institute's commitment to serving the people of the GMS and beyond. He said that MI's success lies in its positive impact on the ground and its dedication to regional development and solidarity.





Open Forum

Director Lee Yoong Yoong facilitated the open forum that began with an insightful message about the advantages of technology and connectivity in today's world, and how these improved how young individuals access information and engage with inspiring changemakers. He reminisced about the challenges faced by previous generations before encouraging participants to take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions.

Getting the ball rolling, a participant from **Indonesia** raised a question about sustainability in advocacy, specifically regarding financial sustainability. MI's Mr. Vichitlekarn said that understanding the core reasons behind advocacy and finding like-minded individuals are important components of a sustainable advocacy. He said that resources are just the surface issue and stressed the necessity of creating compelling concepts and collaborating with beneficiaries and stakeholders for continuity. Weighing in on the question, Madam Minh shared her experience as a businesswoman, explaining that she always considers sustainability when setting up projects, often through membership fees or donor support. She underscored the importance of convincing partners about the project's benefits and developing a good reputation to gain trust from donors.

A participant from **Cambodia** inquired about Madam Minh's shift in focus from education to women's socioeconomic empowerment. Madam Minh reiterated the activities of AWEN, mentioning Cambodia's current chairmanship. She outlined various initiatives such as training, workshops, advocacy, and networking to support businesswomen in the region.

A participant from **Singapore** asked about outreach strategies to authentically reach target beneficiaries. Madam Minh explained that they conduct surveys, consultations, and refer to studies to understand stakeholders' needs. Sharing MI's experience, Mr. Vichitlekarn added that they focus on organizing platforms for experts and stakeholders to interact, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and continuous learning.



A civil society representative from **Lao PDR** briefly shared an experience working with women in poor areas and asked about encouraging ethnic minorities to become entrepreneurs. Madam Minh acknowledged the difficulty and shared her approach of working with government agencies and using methodologies that promote inclusion. She emphasized the use of pilot projects to demonstrate success and persuade partners to support.

A representative from the **Philippines** asked about bridging cultural barriers in women's economic projects. Madam Minh discussed the importance of understanding and adapting to different cultures and policy systems, sharing experiences from her AWEN chairmanship and the importance of raising a collective voice in various forums.

Another participant from the **Philippines** asked how to create projects that consider and represent different national policies and beliefs. Mr. Vichitlekarn said that finding common ground and creating spaces for dialogue are important strategies. He also stressed the value of conducting objective studies to inform decisions and reduce conflicts.

A participant from **Myanmar** asked about minimizing confrontation and maximizing cooperation among political players. Mr. Vichitlekarn highlighted the importance of evidence-based activities and setting boundaries to avoid generalized information, which often leads to confrontation. He suggested focusing on common interests and working on agreeable aspects while setting aside irreconcilable differences.

Another representative from **Cambodia** inquired about consensus-building and persuading others about inclusive ideas. Mr. Vichitlekarn shared his experience with ASEAN+3 on emergency rice reserve, emphasizing the need to acknowledge common problems and interests backed by research. He stressed treating colleagues as allies and not adversaries.

Another participant from **Lao PDR** asked about ensuring sustainable border management in the Mekong River Basin while including indigenous peoples and farmers. Mr. Vichitlekarn mentioned collaboration with the Mekong River Commission and the importance of involving industry and beneficiaries. He emphasized the need for connecting networks for discussion. Madam Minh shared her approach to prioritizing and solving challenges step by step, aided by advisory groups and building a strong reputation.

After the last question was answered, Director Yoong Yoong thanked everyone for their active participation and the APRs for their contributions. He invited participants to visit the ASEAN Secretariat to discuss more about consensus-building.





Solutions Room

The afternoon breakout session, called "Solutions Room," was introduced by **Ms. Anusara Tanpitak**, the Communications and Knowledge Management Manager at Mekong Institute. This interactive session aimed to foster problem-solving through in-depth discussions, practical advice, and actionable steps. The session comprised three breakout rooms, each led by a facilitator, focusing on different themes and each featuring one of the three APRs as resource person.

The breakout rooms were centered around three main themes:

- **Regional Cooperation**, facilitated by Ms. Tanpitak
- **Youth Leadership & Volunteerism**, facilitated by Ms. Anna Leigh Anillo
- **Women Empowerment**, facilitated by Mr. Eastword Manlises

Participants chose their respective breakout rooms and engaged in discussions for one and a half hours. The session aimed to enhance community building and strengthen bonds among participants through collaborative learning and peer interaction, aligning with the symposium's objective of promoting an integrated ASEAN community. It encouraged stakeholders to play more active roles in fostering the ASEAN spirit and advancing regional cooperation.

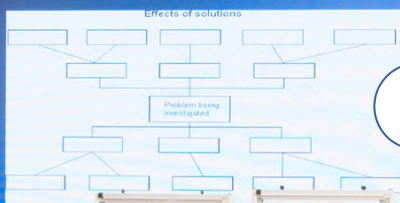
In each breakout room, participants were divided into smaller groups and presented with case studies related to the core themes. Each group selected a case study and co-created solutions using a "solutions tree" template, focusing on practical and implementable solutions across various sectors. The session allowed participants to contribute to finding solutions for critical issues in Lao PDR that also resonate with other ASEAN nations.

Groups were also requested to identify organizations in Lao PDR that are already working on the identified issues. The APRs provided guidance and answered questions as they moved around the room. Each group designated a representative to present their solutions in a concise 5-minute presentation.



*Fill out the provided template (solutions tree) with their proposed solutions. While some challenges may require long-term solutions, focus on finding or creating simple solutions that can be easily put into action by various sectors besides the government, such as businesses and civil society.

*Also, mention organizations in Lao PDR that are working on addressing the problems, if you know of.



Solutions Room Case Studies

Regional Cooperation and Integration

- **Addressing Carbon Emissions:** Implementing steps to reduce carbon emissions and collaborate with other nations for sustainable goals.
- **Food Security in Times of Crisis:** Enhancing regional collaborations to ensure food security during crises like pandemics.
- **Tourism and the Creative Industry:** Revitalizing tourism and supporting creative businesses post-pandemic.
- **Transnational Crimes:** Strengthening regional cooperation to combat drug trafficking and people smuggling.
- **Cybersecurity:** Improving regional cybersecurity cooperation and developing common response strategies.





Youth Leadership and Volunteerism

- **Insecure Youth Employment:** Creating stable, well-paying jobs for young people in Lao PDR, especially outside agriculture.
- **Opportunities in the Agriculture Sector:** Teaching modern farming techniques and providing market access to attract young people to agriculture.
- **Migration Risks:** Reducing the need for urban migration by creating local job opportunities and educating on safe migration.
- **Mental Health Challenges:** Providing accessible mental health support and addressing root causes of mental health issues among youth.
- **Digital Learning Differences:** Ensuring equitable access to digital learning resources and improving internet infrastructure in remote areas.
- **Climate Action Gap:** Empowering and mobilizing Lao youth to take active roles in climate action initiatives.





Women Empowerment

- **Skills Diversification:** Encouraging women in Lao PDR to pursue technical fields and higher-paying jobs traditionally dominated by men.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Addressing the lack of control women have over finances, land, and business training in key industries.
- **Male Engagement:** Involving men and boys in promoting gender equality to challenge harmful gender norms.
- **Addressing Early Marriage:** Supporting young women in pursuing higher education and delaying marriage.
- **Violence Prevention:** Tackling violence against women and improving access to justice and economic opportunities.



The APR assigned in each Solutions Room provided insights and recommendations based on actual experiences to demonstrate the practicability and effectiveness of the proposed solutions. This interactive format promoted networking, peer-learning, and the development of practical solutions to regional challenges.

The Solutions Room proved to be an engaging component of the ASEAN Prize Symposium. It helped attain the following outcomes:

- **Collaboration and Peer-Learning:** Facilitated cross-country collaboration and shared learning among ASEAN representatives.
- **Actionable Solutions:** Encouraged the development of practical solutions that can be implemented by various sectors.
- **Networking:** Strengthened networks and relationships among participants, fostering a sense of regional solidarity and cooperation.
- **Practical Guidance:** Provided participants with valuable insights and recommendations from the APR, enhancing the effectiveness of the proposed solutions.

Closing Ceremony

After the breakout session, attendees were asked to return to the main hall for the closing ceremony. Director Lee Yoong Yoong invited the APRs to join him on stage and discuss the key highlights from their respective Solutions Room. Mr. Vichitlekarn and Madam Minh were both impressed with how actively the participants engaged in small group discussions. They particularly admired the involvement of young participants from the National University of Laos and other organizations from all across Southeast Asia. They said that they also learned so much from the participants' sharing of experiences.

In addition to the APRs, Director Yoong Yoong allowed the participants to share their key learnings. Before formally concluding the event, he encouraged everyone to review the mechanics of the ASEAN Prize and nominate individuals or organizations they deem worthy to be recognized with the prestigious regional award.



Communications and Event Promotion

MI and the ASEAN Secretariat worked together to create communication materials for the ASEAN Prize Symposium. This included writing concept notes, designing [event banners](#), and producing presentations and videos. All relevant details were made available on a dedicated webpage: [ASEAN Prize Symposium](#).

After the event, a press release was shared, accessible here: [Press Release](#). The recorded plenary session is available on MI's Facebook page: [Watch the Livestream](#). Event photos are available here: [Event Photos](#).

The following summarizes the value and reach of published news items and promotional materials about the ASEAN Prize Symposium.

MEDIA COVERAGE				
Media	Date	Language	PR Value (THB)	Reach
1. Mekong Institute Website	May 16, 2024	English	30,363	3,187
2. Mekong Institute Facebook	May 16, 2024	English	30,000	16,000
3. ASEAN Instagram	May 16, 2024	English	180,000	n/a
4. ASEAN Website	May 20, 2024	English	58,548	13,296
5. MOFA Lao PDR Website	May 20, 2024	Laos	15,000	n/a
6. KPL Lao News Agency Website	May 21, 2024	Laos	41,565	6,586
7. ASEAN Facebook	May 22, 2024	English	15,000	n/a
8. ASEAN LinkedIn	May 22, 2024	English	297,903	1,549,350

* Click on each item to see the specific published materials.



MEDIA COVERAGE				
Media	Date	Language	PR Value (THB)	Reach
9. ASEAN X	May 22, 2024	English	148,800	97,842
10. Mekong Institute Website	May 22, 2024	English	30,363	3,187
11. ASEAN Instagram	May 22, 2024	English	180,000	n/a
12. Paxaon Newspaper Facebook	May 22, 2024	Laos	15,000	n/a
13. ASEAN Secretariat Flickr	May 22, 2024	n/a	182,808	172,460
14. Lao National Radio Website	May 22, 2024	Laos	15,000	n/a
15. Mekong Institute Facebook	May 23, 2024	English	30,000	16,000
16. Khon Kaen University Website	May 24, 2024	TH version	238,368	441,985
17. Singapore Embassy Vientiane Facebook	May 24, 2024	English	15,000	n/a
18. Mekong Institute X	May 23, 2024	English	155,682	109,962
TOTAL			1,523,718	2,319,893

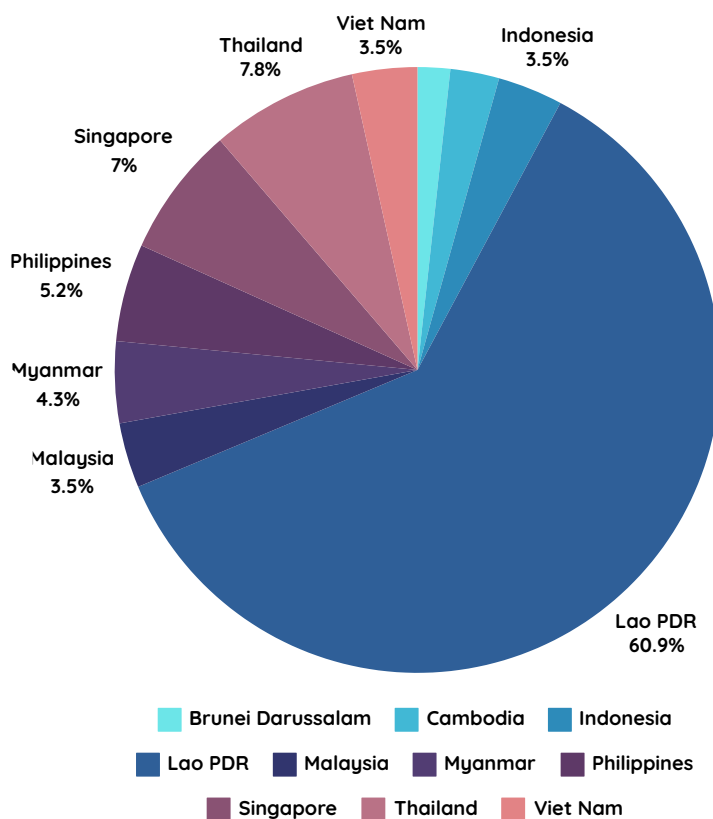
* Click on each item to see the specific published materials.



Monitoring and Evaluation

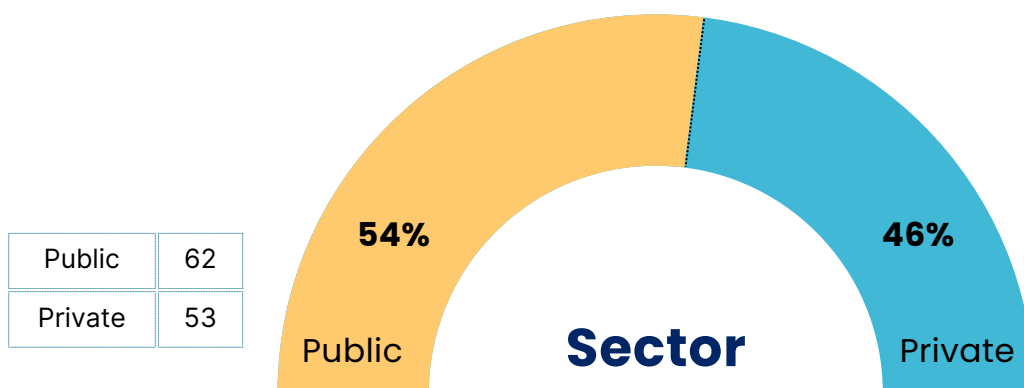
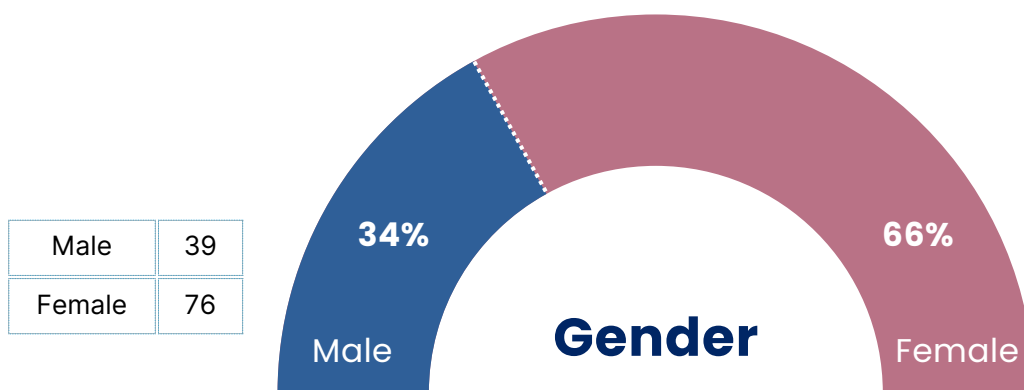
The ASEAN Prize Symposium brought together 115 participants, including stakeholders from Lao PDR, and young leaders and representatives from other ASEAN Member States. A majority of the attendees were from the National University of Laos (36 participants) and civil society organizations based in Lao PDR. One of the main goals of the symposium was to raise public awareness about the esteemed ASEAN Prize. In particular, the event aimed to enhance ASEAN Prize engagement among individuals and groups in Lao PDR to encourage nominations. The active involvement of individuals and organizations from Lao PDR contributed significantly to achieving this objective.

ASEAN Member State	No. of Participants
Brunei Darussalam	2
Cambodia	3
Indonesia	4
Lao PDR	70
Malaysia	4
Myanmar	5
Philippines	6
Singapore	8
Thailand	9
Viet Nam	4
Total	115



The ASEAN Prize Symposium attracted a diverse group of participants. The gender distribution was positive, with 76 females and 39 males attending, showcasing strong female engagement, which constituted approximately 66% of the total participants.

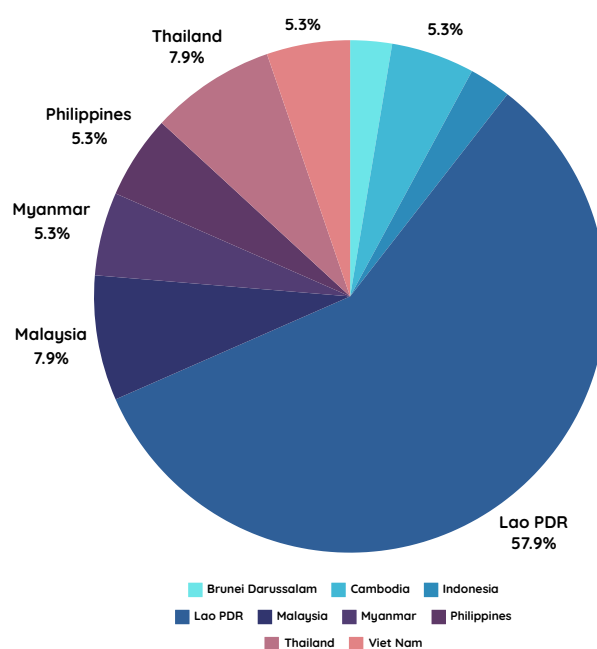
Sector-wise, the symposium saw balanced representation with 62 participants from the public sector and 53 from the private sector. This near-equal participation suggests a broad appeal and relevance of the symposium's topics and activities, fostering rich discussions and collaborations across different professional backgrounds.



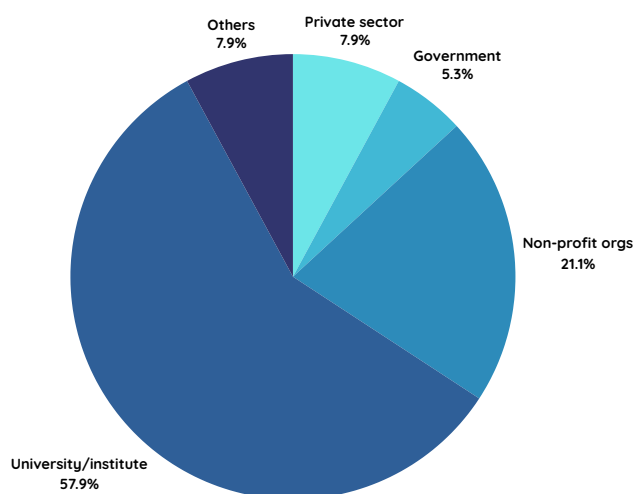
Participants' Feedback

To evaluate the event's success and guide future planning, feedback was gathered from participants after the closing ceremony. In total, 38 participants completed the online survey questionnaire.

ASEAN Member State	No. of Respondents
Brunei Darussalam	1
Cambodia	2
Indonesia	1
Lao PDR	22
Malaysia	3
Myanmar	2
Philippines	2
Singapore	0
Thailand	3
Viet Nam	2
Total	38

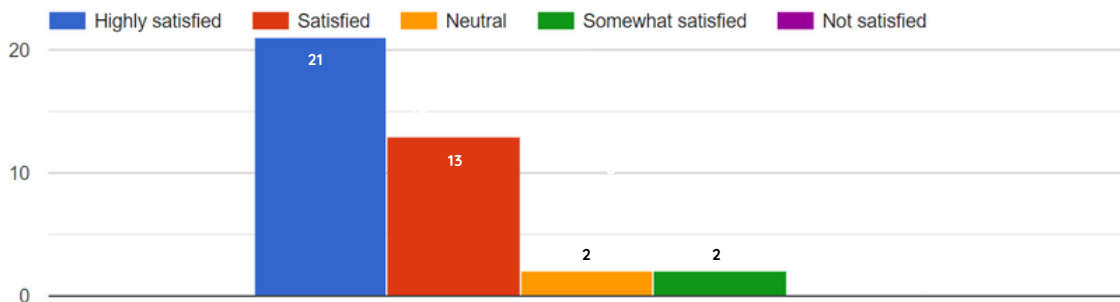


Sector	No. of Respondents
Government	2
Private sector	3
Non-profit orgs	8
University/institute	22
Others	3
Total	38

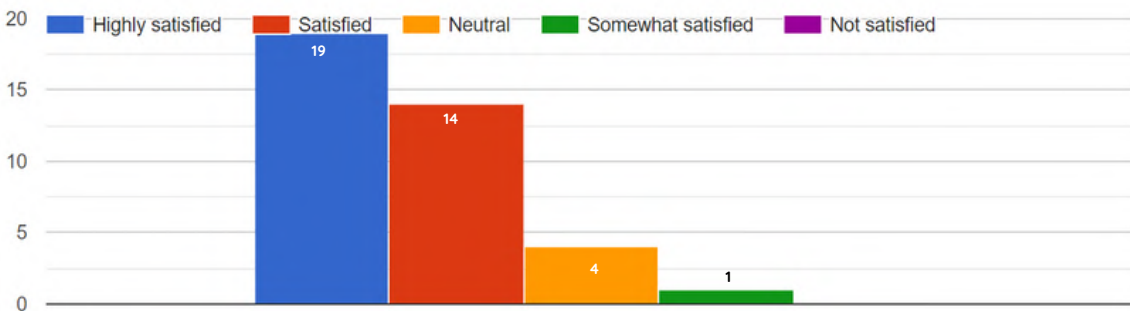


A large majority or 89% of the respondents expressed satisfaction or high satisfaction with the event. Similarly, 86.8% of the respondents found the event's breakout session to be satisfactory or highly satisfactory.

Overall Event



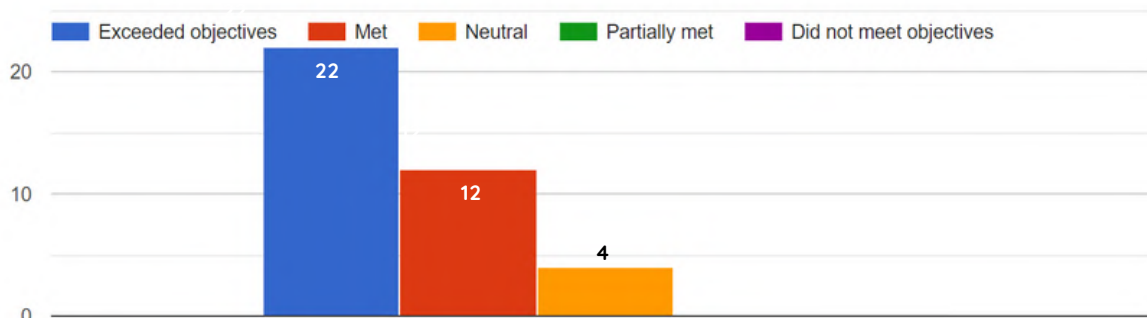
Breakout Session: Solutions Room



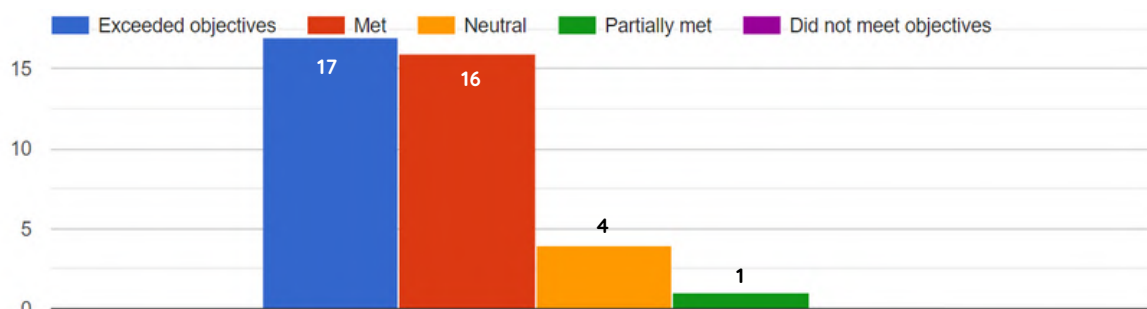
Most respondents agree that the event successfully met its objectives, such as:

- Creating heightened awareness of the prestigious ASEAN Prize and inspire future nominations and submissions,
- Facilitating the building of common understanding among ASEAN individuals and entities about their potential and pivotal roles in shaping a robust regional community, and
- Encouraging stakeholders to take on more active and impactful roles in fostering the ASEAN spirit and advancing regional cooperation and integration efforts.

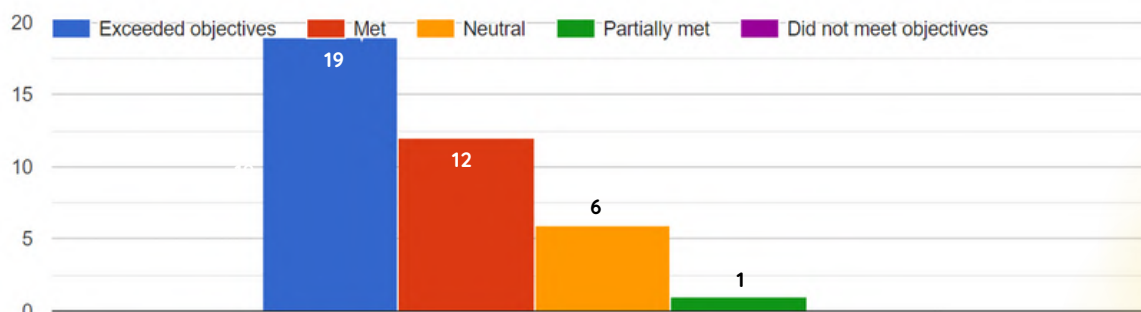
Objective 1: Create heightened awareness of the prestigious ASEAN Prize and inspire future nominations and submissions.



Objective 2: Facilitate the building of common understanding among ASEAN individuals and entities about their potential and pivotal roles in shaping a robust regional community.

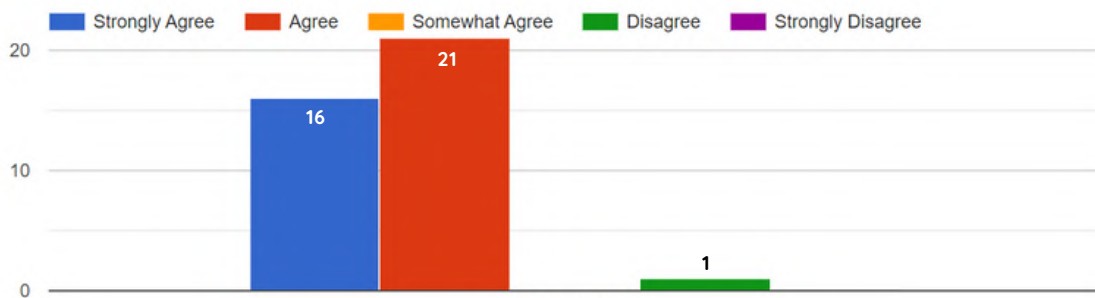


Objective 3: Encourage stakeholders to take on more active and impactful roles in fostering the ASEAN spirit and advancing regional cooperation and integration efforts.

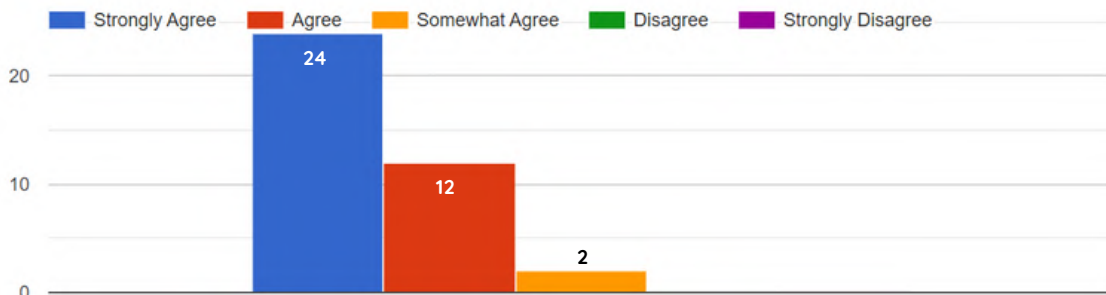


The respondents were also asked about the program's outcomes, specifically its usefulness to them. Most respondents expressed that they now understand the significance of the ASEAN Prize in fostering regional integration within ASEAN cooperation. They have also gained valuable ideas and insights from the discussions that are advantageous for their work or studies. Additionally, they have acquired new knowledge, experiences, inspiration, and professional connections through the event.

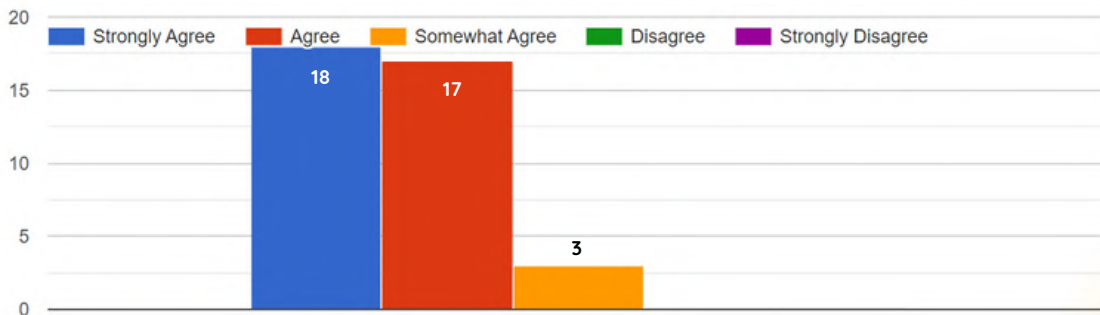
Outcome 1: Participants now have a better understanding of the role of the ASEAN Prize in promoting regional integration within ASEAN cooperation.



Outcome 2: Participants have acquired valuable ideas and insights from the discussions that are beneficial for their work or studies.

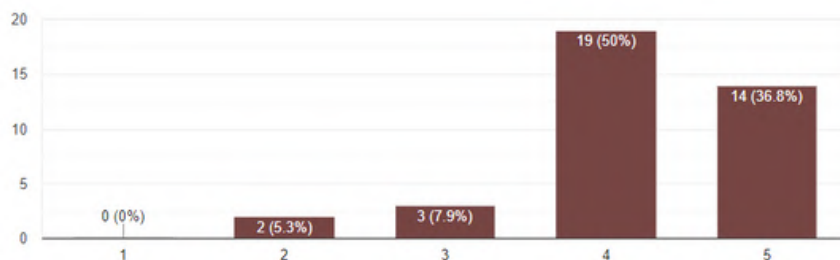


Outcome 3: I have gained fresh knowledge, experience, inspiration, and/or professional connections through this year's event.

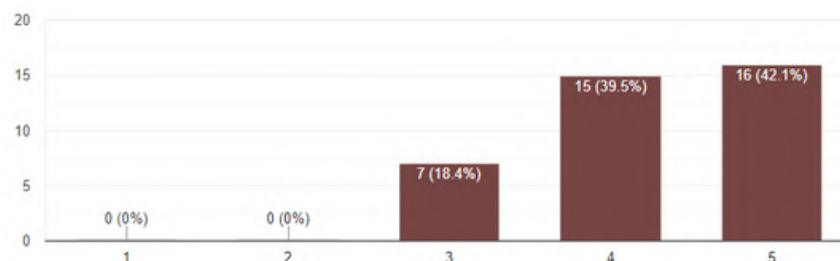


Respondents were asked about the efficiency of event planning and preparations, rating them on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating a high level of satisfaction.

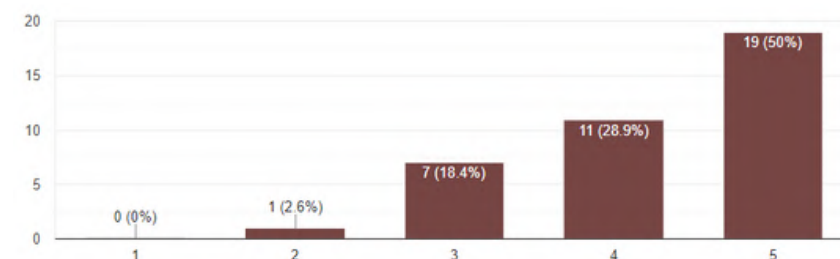
Relevance and adequacy of information provided



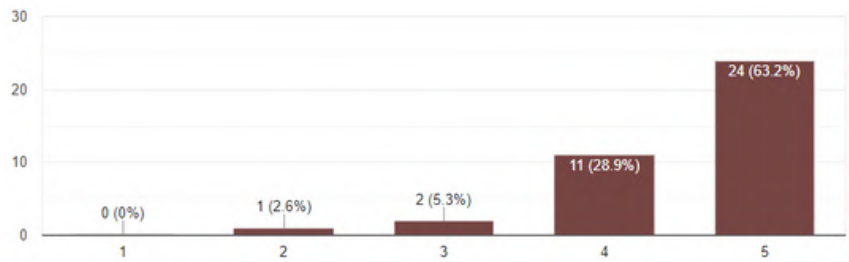
Event format



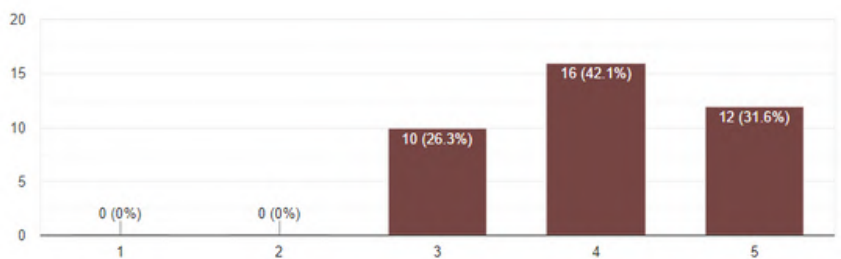
Choice of session topics



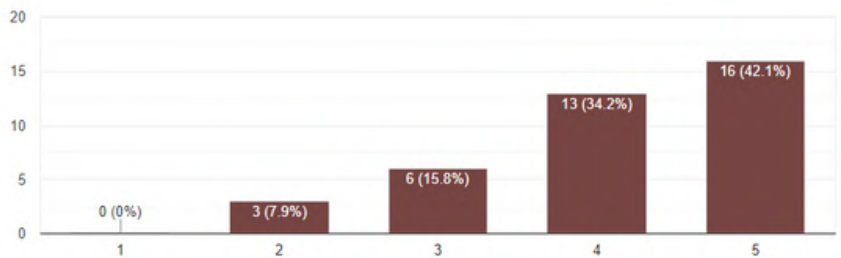
Quality of speaker presentations



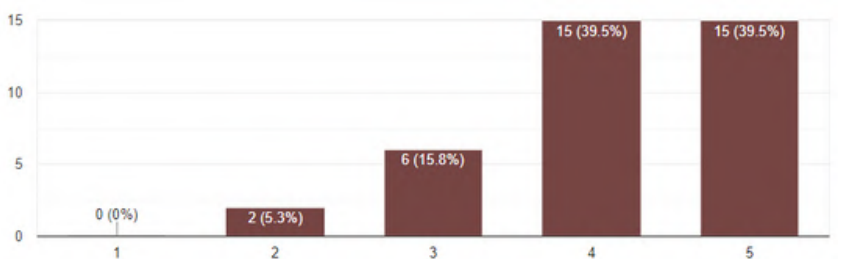
Time allocated for sessions and discussions



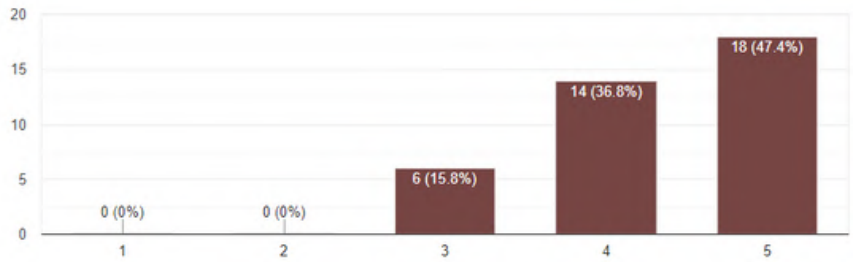
Opportunity for participants to contribute to discussions



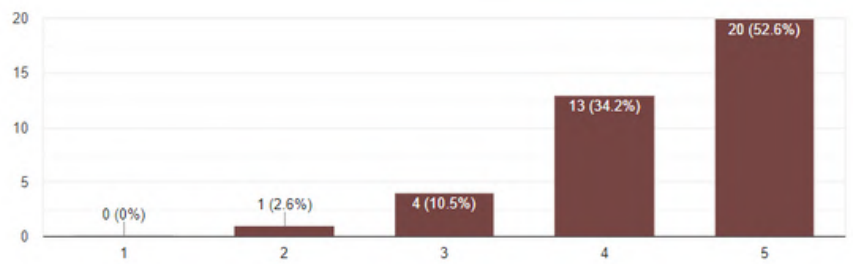
Time for Networking



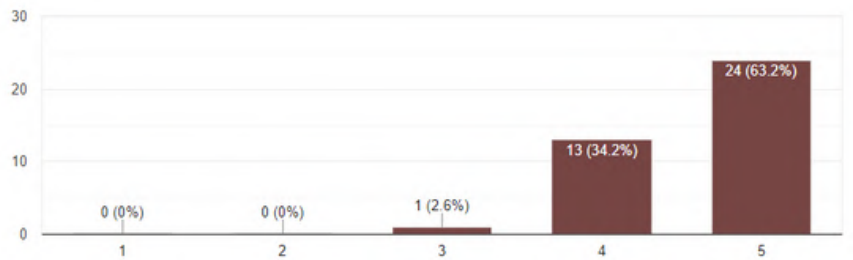
Mix of participants



Venue arrangement



Meals and refreshments





Based on 22 responses, the following are the most liked aspects of the ASEAN Prize Symposium:

Breakout Sessions

- Frequently highlighted as an engaging and interactive component.
- Provided opportunities for in-depth discussions and learning.
- Enabled participants to share and exchange ideas effectively.



Networking Opportunities

- The networking session during breaks was appreciated for facilitating connections.
- Allowed participants to interact with peers from various countries, fostering a collaborative environment.



Inspiring Sharing Sessions

- Sessions featuring ASEAN Prize recipients were particularly inspiring.
- Mr. Vichitlekarn’s sharing session was specifically mentioned for its impact.

Content and Topics

- The overall content and topics covered were well-received.
- Participants appreciated discussions on development, environment, and women empowerment.





Group Discussions and Panels

- Group discussions and panel sessions were seen as valuable for learning.
- Participants enjoyed the open and inclusive atmosphere, which encouraged sharing opinions.

Youth Leadership Activities

- Activities focused on youth leadership and collaboration were appreciated.
- Encouraged active participation and sharing of ideas among young leaders.

General Activities

- Overall activities provided by the symposium were praised for their educational value.
- Participants gained substantial knowledge and insights from various group activities.



Based on 17 responses, the following are what participants consider as areas for improvement in the ASEAN Prize Symposium:

In-Depth Discussions and Sharing Sessions. Some participants suggested allocating more time for in-depth discussions and sharing sessions among delegates, especially during breakout sessions.

Symposium Q&A Session. Improvements were suggested for the Q&A sessions, including more efficient conduct and better confirmation from the person asking the question to ensure their expectations are met.

Nomination Mechanism. The nomination mechanism for awards or recognition could be reviewed and potentially improved.

Representation in Breakout Sessions. Suggestions were made to intentionally group participants in breakout sessions to ensure equal representation from various groups.

Delegate Participation. Some responses indicated a desire for a greater number of delegates to be included in the symposium.

Resource Person Feedback. It was suggested that resource persons provide more clear-cut inputs and comments to enhance the learning experience.

Topics and Presentations. Feedback included suggestions for a wider variety of topics, including more focus on women empowerment. Some participants mentioned the need for more presentations.

Language and Communication. One respondent mentioned occasional difficulty understanding accents, indicating a need for clearer communication.

General Positive Feedback. Several responses indicated satisfaction with the current format, with comments like "None, keep up the good work!", "It's ok", and "It's already perfect!" indicating high levels of satisfaction with the symposium.





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