



**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**on**  
**Advancing Inclusive Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for**  
**Youth Using the Digital Technology in the COVID 19 Pandemic Era**

This a set of Southeast Asia Youth Recommendations for key stakeholders in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to foster inclusivity for youth with disabilities in ASEAN economic recovery efforts, particularly related to their equal rights to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities using digital technology. The recommendations were created by youth representatives from ASEAN member states during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on August 22, 2021 consisting of 36 youth with and without disabilities.

The specific action points of the *ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* have been identified under each recommendation to express our commitment to support and contribute to the ASEAN's ongoing efforts to make this region more inclusive especially for youth with disabilities.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

### ***Policies and Regulations***

1. ASEAN Member States (AMS) should create inclusive policies and regulations to increase employability of youth with and without disabilities and create a better work environment, which includes laws relating to self-employment or gig workers, the right to a living wage, enabling working environment including the possibility for remote working, appropriate working hours, and the right to exercise their labor rights and to unionize. (AEC 11, ASCC 8)
2. AMS should create and implement the policies on the recruitment and hiring practices to ensure the recruitment strategies and hiring policies do not discriminate against youth with disabilities and provide for reasonable accommodations to made during interviews, onboarding, etc.
3. Senior Officials Meeting on Labour (SLOM) and Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) should encourage employers from both government and private sectors to strengthen the implementation of inclusive employment for persons with disabilities by creating guidance on how to develop and implement disability-inclusive organizational policies. (AEC 11, AEC 24, AEC 25)
4. AMS should encourage to create policies and regulations that enable and support youth with disabilities to take jobs and enhance work performance by integrating ICT and the utilization of assistive technologies. (AEC 13, AEC 18)
5. AMS should create policies on tax reduction for companies who hire persons with disabilities (or some sort of incentive scheme for employers). ASEAN should conduct a study on the impacts of incentives such as tax reduction on disability-inclusive hiring, then keep the part about what AMS can do about it. (AEC 24, AEC 25)
6. AMS should introduce policies that encourage the development and implementation of fully funded bridging courses for youth with disabilities to acquire requisite technical knowledge and skills to be hired or to continue their studies in the areas of Artificial Intelligence (AI), software engineering, network system, Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics, and other ICT and



green industries related fields. (AEC 13, AEC 18, AEC 22, ASCC 25)

7. AMS should promote the establishment of Disability Support Service Offices in all state and private universities to provide critical resources for students with disabilities, enabling an accessible learning environment, adaptable learning curriculum, career development, and the use of the accessible digital technology. (AEC 13, ASCC 5, ASCC 11, ASCC 12, ASCC 15, ASCC 12.2)
8. ASEAN should encourage policies on providing discounts for online skill courses, subsidiary internet prices, and access to high-speed internet in certain locations to expand access of young people with disabilities.
9. AMS should create hotline and complaint mechanisms for persons with disabilities who encounter employment discrimination. Resources on employment regulations/policies regarding youth with and without disabilities should be available for awareness and education purposes (ASCC 13, ASCC 26)

### **Digital Platforms and Skills Enhancements**

1. ASEAN, its related institutions (AICHR, SOMED, SOMY, SOMSWD, ACWC) and AMS are encouraged to promote modules, courses, and training about disability rights for government, school, and private sectors, including but not limited to modules about different types of disabilities, such as autism, cultural competency training, ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025, and relevant laws of the rights of employees with disabilities. (APSC 4, ASCC 25, ASCC 26)
2. ASEAN, its related institutions (TELSOM, SLOM, SOMSWD, SOMY) and AMS are encouraged to promote web accessibility and digital applications and accessible features that will increase the employability of persons with disabilities, including but not limited to sign language interpreters, closed captions, video relay services (VRS), and note-takers at offline or online meetings. AMS are encouraged to transfer materials to a "readable" format that is accessible to people with intellectual or cognitive disabilities. (APSC 2, AEC 3, AEC 13, ASCC 5)
3. AMS should support employers to build institutional knowledge on inclusive employment through disability sensitivity trainings and policy advocacy. (AEC 24, AEC 25)

### **Raising Awareness**

1. ASEAN, AMS, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Disabled People's Organization (DPOs), and other related institutions (AICHR, SOMED, SOMY, SOMSWD, ACWC, SLOM) should raise awareness about the meaning of "accessibility" among youth with and without disabilities through programs or events that can enable youth to share their experiences and provide opportunities to address gaps and misunderstandings between persons with and without disabilities. (APSC 23, ASCC 3,)
2. Government, CSOs, organization of persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders should advocate for disability rights based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). (APSC 1, APDC 7.6, APSC 17, APSC 19, APSC 21, AEC 1, ASCC 1, ASCC 2, ASCC 6, ASCC 7, ASCC 8, ASCC 11, ASCC 13, ASCC 14, ASCC 19, ASCC 26)
3. ASEAN and its related institutions (AICHR, SOMY, SOMSWD, ACWC, SLOM) should encourage awareness raising among the private sector about the capability of persons with disabilities, their achievements, and the benefits of creating inclusive environments at work for youth with and without disabilities. (AEC1, APSC 26)
4. ASEAN, its related institutions (AICHR, SLOM, SOMY), AMS as well as the regional and local disabled people's organizations, should nurture, promote, and advance the power of collective bargaining among workers with disabilities in various sectors through all appropriate social,



legal, and administrative measures. (AEC 1)

5. AMS should create an accessible environment among youth with and without disabilities; the responsible organizations should advocate for universal design principles, which may facilitate greater chances for the employment of youth with disabilities. (APSC 2, AEC 3, ASCC 15, ASCC 17)

### **Cross Development Collaboration**

1. AMS should ensure the participation of private companies in creating accessible technology and public access. (APSC 2, ASCC 5)
2. ASEAN and its related institutions (SOMY, SOMSWD, SLOM) should build a regional network of inclusive enterprises and companies to promote company policies that create job opportunities with equitable salary rates for persons with disabilities, in particularly youth with disabilities. (AEC 4, ASCC 27)
3. ASEAN and its related institutions (SOMY, SOMSWD, SLOM) should fund projects related to creating employment opportunities and supporting entrepreneurship for youth with and without disabilities. (AEC 4, ASCC 27)
4. ASEAN and its related institutions (SOMY, SOMSWD, SLOM, SOMED) should establish a research center led by scholars and professionals with disabilities, in close collaboration with other important stakeholders, dedicated to studying the employment and job market trends for young people with disabilities, particularly in relation to technological and legal innovation, and to prepare relevant policy drafts to be adopted by ASEAN governments. (AEC 8)
5. AMS should introduce an assistive technology scheme that directly benefits workers with disabilities, including contract workers and interns, to ensure access to reasonable accommodations among others, through close cooperation with employers in the private sector to subsidize or sponsor the purchase of assistive technologies for their employees. (AEC 9, AEC 10, AEC 14, AEC 15, AEC 20, ASCC 5, ASCC 25)
6. ASEAN and its related institutions (SOMY) should establishing an inclusive platform to connect ASEAN Youth and create activities to connect youth with and without disabilities through networking platforms. (AEC 13)

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

### **Digital Platforms and Skills Enhancements**

1. AMS should enhance the capability of social services by providing vocational assessments, employability training, job and career coaching, a crowd-funding platform and community partner which include but not limited to CSOs or designated representatives from the digital or media sector to support the community. (APSC 4, AEC 15, ASCC 22, ASCC 25, ASCC 26)
2. ASEAN and its related institutions (TELSOM, SOMY, SOMSWD, SOMED, SLOM) should promote virtual entrepreneurship mentoring programs, digital learning, and security training. (AEC 13)
3. ASEAN, its related institutions (TELSOM, SOMY, SOMSWD, SOMED, SLOM) and AMS should conduct research and provide prototype development grants for young people with disabilities who have ideas for inventions to solve local socio-economic issues faced by persons with disabilities, including conducting mentoring programs, accessible commercialization platforms, and marketing support. (AEC 8, AEC 18)
4. AMS should provide training, funding, and mentoring to encourage youth with disabilities, with



extra attention given to young women with disabilities and youth with disabilities living in rural areas, to participate in digital economic activities or to start a social enterprise or cooperative relating to ICT, green technologies, and 4th industrial revolution industries; ensuring the business registration, financial assistance, and business loan application processes are accessible and easy to understand by persons with different types of disabilities. (AEC 15, ASCC 25, ASCC 26)

5. AMS should ensure all capacity-building activities on the digitalization of traditional economic sectors, such as smart farming programs, are inclusive of entrepreneurs with disabilities, including funding support, provision of appropriate accessible technologies, and affordable supply chain ecosystem. (AEC 4, AEC 13, ASCC 27)
6. ASEAN, and its related institutions (TELSOM, SOMY, SOMSWD, SOMED, SLOM) and AMS promotes emerging technology such as blockchain technology, decentralized finance, and non-fungible token could empower persons with disabilities to participate in the creator economy in the region by commission a study, create a community of practice, engage in knowledge sharing, and so forth. (AEC 1, AEC 22, ASCC 25)

#### ***Cross Development Collaboration***

1. AMS should ensure all e-commerce platforms are in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (WCAG 2.1), including accessible and safe online transaction systems, through close cooperation with private providers of e-commerce platforms and disabled people's organizations. (AEC 3, ASCC 5)
2. Each AMS should enhance the access and equity of persons with disabilities, particularly youth, in local creative industries through the appropriate integration and utilization of ICT and assistive technologies, including close cooperation between relevant stakeholders such as film producers, creative art academies, and so forth. (AEC 13)

We hope that these recommendations can inspire key stakeholders in ASEAN to include the needs of youth with disabilities in their policy-making process and to promulgate direct engagement between youth with and without disabilities with ASEAN officials and private companies who can better ensure equal opportunities of employment and entrepreneurship through the usage of digital technologies.