

The ASEAN



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SPORTS FOR ALL



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ASEAN Women in
Sports Ambassadors

Driving the Inclusive and
Equality Agenda

Traditional Sports and Games:
ASEAN's Cultural Heritage



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The Inside View

- 7** | Overview on ASEAN Sports Cooperation
Larasati Indrawagita, Senior Officer, Education, Youth, and Sports Division, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department
- 14** | Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalists from ASEAN
The ASEAN Editorial Team
- 15** | A Fairer Approach to Measure Sports Development
Suyadi Pawiro, Assistant Deputy for Sports Partnership and Rewards, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Republic of Indonesia
- 17** | People in ASEAN Need to be More Active
Asahi Takano, Partner and Head of Asia Pacific, Portas Consulting and Jhoshan Jothilingam, Advisor, Portas Consulting
- 19** | FIFA Determined to Untap the Huge Potential of Women's Football
FIFA International Relations and Public Affairs Department
- 22** | Advocating for Clean Sport in ASEAN
Gobinathan Nair, Director General, Southeast Asia Regional Anti-Doping Organization
- 24** | Driving the Equality and Inclusivity Agenda
Naser Wahab, Media and Communications Director, ASEAN Para Sports Federation
- 27** | Physical Education and Inclusion
Yu Shishido, Research Fellow, Nippon Sport Science University
- 32** | How Universal Design Principles Promote Inclusivity in Sports
Timmy Setiawan, Architect, Unitri Cipta Consultant and The ASEAN Editorial Team
- 34** | Fostering ASEAN Identity Through the Safeguarding of Traditional Sports and Games in the Modern World
Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Cambodia
- 36** | Traditional Sports and Games: Preserving ASEAN's Cultural Heritage
Nasya Nabila Nursabrina, Project Assistant, Education, Youth, and Sports Division, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department
- 37** | Traditional Sports and Games
The ASEAN Editorial Team



Viewpoint

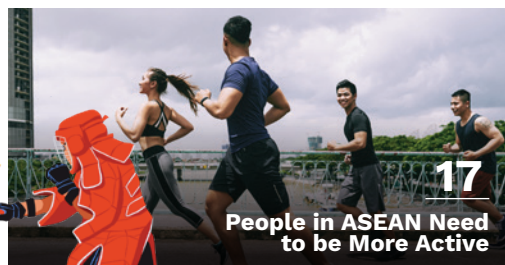
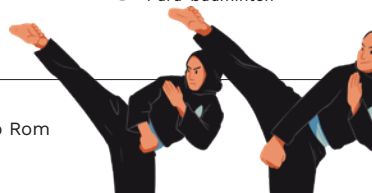
- 5** | Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn
Minister of Tourism and Sports, Thailand and Chair, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports

ASEAN Women in Sports Ambassadors

- 9** | Hidilyn Diaz
Weightlifting
- 9** | Farah Ann Abdul Hadi
Gymnastics
- 10** | Amita Berthier
Fencing
- 10** | Pov Sokha
Vovinam
- 11** | Panipak Wongpattanakit
Taekwondo
- 11** | Soulamphone Kerdla
Swimming
- 12** | Soe Soe Myar
Taekwondo
- 12** | Tuyet Van Chau
Taekwondo
- 13** | HRH Princess 'Azemah Ni'matul Bolkih Binti His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkih Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah
Polo
- 13** | Leani Ratri Oktila
Para-badminton

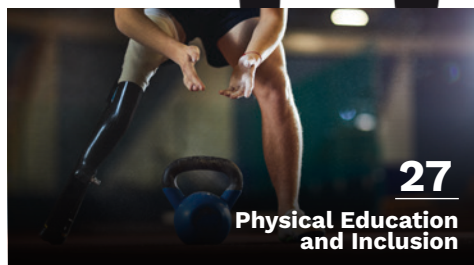
Conversations

- 29** | Kholidin
Archery Para Athlete
- 30** | Jasper Belarmino Rom
Chess Para Athlete



17

People in ASEAN Need to be More Active



27

Physical Education and Inclusion



The Philippines' Nesthy Petecion in her women's featherweight 60-kg match against Japan's Sena Irie, 2020 Summer Olympics, Tuesday, 3 August 2021, in Tokyo, Japan

Note from the Editorial Team

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the suspension of many sporting events, stalling many of our athletes' dreams of competing, winning medals, and breaking records. The pandemic has been a test of their perseverance and well-being. However, their hard work and patience were finally rewarded as major sports events were held in 2021 and 2022—the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, the 31st Southeast Asian or SEA Games in Viet Nam, and the 11th ASEAN Para Games in Solo, Indonesia.

As in all sporting events, there have been countless stories of triumphs and losses. But this time, beyond the medal counts and rankings, the camaraderie, sportsmanship and sense of humanity seemed more palpable.

The pandemic has prompted changes in sports policies, management, and performance over the past two years. ASEAN Ministerial Meeting



Rungroj Thainiyom of Team Thailand in action during the men's singles class 6 quarterfinals match between USA and Thailand at the Andaluca 2022 World Para Table Tennis Championships on 10 November 2022 in Granada, Spain

on Sports (AMMS) Chair, Thailand's Minister of Tourism and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn shares the steps the ASEAN sports sector has taken to adapt to future emergencies, create new operational models, and build resilience towards economic development. These are all in line with the AMMS' goals to support and promote sports that are accessible, community-based, equitable, safe, and beneficial to all.

Inclusion and gender equality are significant cornerstones of sports in ASEAN. Under the Japan-funded initiative #WeScore, ASEAN appointed 10 prominent athletes and sports officials as ASEAN Women in Sports Ambassadors in December 2021. We feature all 10 in this edition and highlight how they have used their influence to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through sports across the region. ASEAN has also maintained its partnership with FIFA in increasing the participation of women in football and encouraging

women's leadership in sports. With two national teams from ASEAN— Viet Nam and the Philippines— making history by qualifying for the Women's World Cup in 2023, there is momentum for developing women's football in the region. FIFA writes an article on this issue.

Over the past two years, ASEAN also launched campaigns with partners. One is with FIFA to promote healthy lifestyles and address mental health issues brought about by the pandemic. Another is with Southeast Asia Regional Anti-Doping Organization (SEARADO) to drive the message of fair play and clean sport.

The ASEAN Para Sports Federation, or APSF, has been a driver for inclusion and equality for athletes with disabilities for over two decades. After several postponements, the 11th ASEAN Para Games was held in August 2022. This year, the APSF expects 2,000 athletes and officials to join the Games in Phnom Penh, the first time it will be held in the city.

Traditional games and sports are also part of Southeast Asia's rich cultural heritage. As ASEAN Chair in 2022, Cambodia pushed for preserving and promoting these traditional games. Cambodia's Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports, Hang Chuon Naron, notes how keeping this intangible cultural heritage can help build a stronger ASEAN community.

As we begin 2023, we take inspiration from our region's outstanding athletes, who continue to persevere, beat the odds, and reach for their goals.

The ASEAN would like to express our gratitude to the Government of India for its continued support of the magazine. We would also like to thank the Government of Japan, through its JENESYS programme, for supporting the production of this special edition.



Indonesia's Marcus Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo play against Taiwan's Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin during their men's doubles group play stage badminton match at the 2020 Summer Olympics, 27 July 2021, in Tokyo, Japan

Viewpoint

Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn

Minister of Tourism and Sports, Thailand

Chair, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS)

Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn tells *The ASEAN* about the goals of ASEAN in the field of sports and the changes and challenges brought about by COVID-19. He also discussed how ASEAN Member States can promote inclusiveness in sports and support their top-ranked and world-class athletes.

Can you provide a brief overview of the state of sports development in the ASEAN region? What are the bright spots, and what areas need improvement?

Minister Ratchakitprakarn:

Sports development in the ASEAN region aims to promote healthy and active lifestyles to improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of the ASEAN Community.



To improve the quality of sustainable community-based sports and strengthen the capability of local communities, we need to provide activities or sports for all and promote people's well-being of all ages. Moreover, we should encourage sports integrity by increasing awareness on anti-doping measures.

Sports can also help promote gender equality at national and regional levels.

In ASEAN, the area of the sports development still faces difficulties and challenges associated with technology and know-how.

What are the goals and responsibilities of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS) for the field of sports?

Minister Ratchakitprakarn:

One, to promote equality and accessibility to sports regardless of gender, age, social status, and physical condition.

Two, to achieve the goal of sports excellence for competitions at both national and international levels.

Three, to support and exchange knowledge on sports within and outside ASEAN to enhance cooperation among experts on sports and drive the ASEAN sports movement by sharing best practices and exchanging experiences.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic derailed or reoriented the goals and plans of AMMS for sports?

Minister Ratchakitprakarn:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had very considerable effects on sports and physical activity. In the early stages of the pandemic, most major sporting events at international, regional, and national levels were cancelled or postponed. Therefore, the AMMS had to work closely and adapt rapidly to find innovative solutions to ensure the effective recovery and reorientation of the sports sector. We did this by creating new operational models to facilitate future sporting events that are safe and accessible for all—for

example, the use of digital platforms for sports events and physical activities.

What initiatives have been taken by the AMMS and your country to promote inclusion in sports?

Minister Ratchakitprakarn:

The (Thai) Cabinet approved the 2021-2026 Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model Strategic Plan and declared it as the national agenda that will lead Thailand to achieve the goals of a high-income country in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports drives "the clean sports" project under the 2021-2026 BCG Strategic Plan to promote various environmentally friendly sports events, including the use of renewable materials, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 (Post COVID-19 Strategy). The main goals are to develop the resilience of the sports industry towards sustained economic growth, and ensure sports' preparedness to external and environmental threats.

This project is considered an innovative approach that emphasises the importance of future environmental impacts. For example, the selection of the host country for world-class sports, such as the Olympic Games, has to consider the preservation of our natural environment and the use of renewable and sustainable resources, so that the construction of facilities is not a wasteful investment that becomes a burden of the host country.

As sport events involve a large number of participants, venues are often littered with plastic, water bottle, styrofoam boxes, etc., producing large amounts of garbage and wasting volumes of water. As a result, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports developed policies to organise all competitions that are environmentally friendly, campaigned to limit the amount of waste, reduced the use of electricity and fuel, decreased greenhouse gas emissions, and promoted the use of renewable energy for environmental sustainability.

With many ASEAN citizens winning medals in the Olympics and other international competitions, what can ASEAN and its Member States do to maintain the momentum and support these elite athletes?

Minister Ratchakitprakarn:

To maintain the momentum and support elite athletes, two main factors are necessary:

i. Maintaining the achievement levels

ASEAN must collect data to analyse the success factors of participants in international competitions, such as the physical condition of the athlete.

We need to encourage the use of sports management and get support from the government, private sector, and other relevant organisations that can lead to developing work plans on sports and standardise sports development programmes as a conceptual basis for future development.

ASEAN should promote fundamental sports to develop more elite athletes. Sports science must also be used for physical and mental preparation in the pre-competition stage and in post-competition to reach the highest potential of elite athletes. In Thailand, sports science centres provide experts and equipment such as exercise physiology, sports medicine, sports biomechanics, sports psychology, sports nutrition, etc.

ii. Support for the elite athletes

Other than the prize money and payout that an athlete receives, it is important to encourage a healthy mindset for winners and losers by the use of sports psychology, reward management, and welfare for retired elite athletes. Therefore, ASEAN must seek the best practices and lessons learnt in the region to set the guidelines for Member States following the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports policy.

Getting into the Bigger Game: Overview on ASEAN Sports Cooperation



Larasati Indrawagita

Senior Officer, Education, Youth, and Sports Division

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department

Sports spark joy in almost every community. They are recreational, bring people together, and spur friendly conversations even among strangers. Different kinds of sports are played or watched by people from all walks of life around the globe to feel good, for a healthier lifestyle, or for some, for socio-economic reasons. ASEAN is not an exception.

In April 2010, at the 16th ASEAN Summit in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, the ASEAN Leaders agreed on intensifying cooperation in sports within the region. This led to the establishment of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports or AMMS and the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Sports or SOMS.

Two years after the establishment, in 2013, the ASEAN Sports Ministers adopted the Vientiane Declaration on Sports Cooperation in ASEAN,

which articulates ASEAN's endeavour to promote community-based, non-discriminatory, affordable, accessible programmes, with conducive ecosystem for all ages and performance levels. The declaration also commits to sustain the contribution of the ASEAN sports industry in enhancing the socio-economic development of ASEAN.

In the past decade, the ASEAN sports sector, national sports agencies, and relevant sports entities have significantly developed and undertaken many ASEAN-driven initiatives, such as ASEAN Para Games, ASEAN School Games, and the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games.

In the last two years, the sports sector deepened its conversations on mental health and well-being, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, noting how these have become critically important for the people in the region in the midst of the pandemic. Although societies, especially in cities and urbanised areas, have discovered more ways to exercise and try new sports through mobile fitness apps and various social media challenges—or being introduced to the world of eSports, people in rural areas remain engaged in their daily physical activities, community sports or even traditional sports and games.

Sports during the COVID-19 pandemic

Amidst all the COVID-19 restrictions, a number of major sports events pushed through. The Tokyo 2020 Games and Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics were successfully held after many months of isolation and deferment of large-scale physical sports events. ASEAN athletes did extremely well in these events and in December 2021, ASEAN feted the medalists of Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games at a hybrid event.

To better understand the state of sports participation and interest in the region, including in the context of how societies have adapted to the pandemic, in 2021, an ASEAN Survey on Sports Participation was undertaken. Led by Singapore through its Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and conducted by Portas Consulting as part of its Active Citizens Worldwide initiative, the survey aimed to measure sports' contribution to socio-economic development in 10 ASEAN cities. The survey highlighted that physical activity is creating value to economies through expenditure, investment, and employment.

Aligning ASEAN's sports goals with the SDGs

Although addressing sports cooperation through socio-economic perspectives has been prescribed under the 2013 Vientiane Declaration, establishing a comprehensive multistakeholder approach with a well-rounded set of policies and programmes requires resources, time, and building capacity.

In 2017, ASEAN aligned its sports strategies with the Kazan Action Plan, a global document that regards sports as an enabler of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This alignment, articulated in the Joint Statement of the Fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports, informed the development of the ASEAN Work Plan on Sports 2021-2025 consisting of five priority areas. These priority areas are as follows:

- i. Sports' Contribution to Key Development Outcomes and Peace;
- ii. Promotion of Healthy Lifestyle through Sports Participation and Physical Activities;
- iii. Professional Capacity Development, Sports Integrity, and Sports Science;
- iv. Promoting ASEAN Awareness through Sports Activities, Sports Tourism, and Sports Industry; and
- v. Resource Mobilisation, Partner Engagement, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for ASEAN Cooperation on Sports.

Partnership with sports stakeholders

The ASEAN sports sector has also been strengthening collaboration with relevant ASEAN entities, such as the ASEAN Football Federation, ASEAN Para Sports Federation, ASEAN Chess Confederation.

Formal cooperation with new partners has also been made, such as with the Commonwealth Secretariat for technical support in measuring sports' contribution to socio-economic development and the SDGs. Memorandums of Understanding have

also been signed with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Beyond these, many other partners also contribute to the implementation of the ASEAN Workplan on Sports 2021-2025, including UNESCO, UN Women, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Southeast Asia Anti-Doping Organisation (SEARADO), and the Right to Play Foundation. Even further, quite a number of inspiring athletes and sports personalities are involved in ASEAN's sports campaigns, such as the ASEAN-FIFA *#BeActive*, *#FiveSteps*, and *#ReachOut* videos, as well as ASEAN *#WeScore* Campaign, an awareness-raising initiative on gender equality in sports supported by the Government of Japan.

“

Physical activity is creating value to economies through expenditure, investment, and employment

Cooperation with dialogue partners

Cooperation with Dialogue Partners plays a crucial role in the advancement of ASEAN sports cooperation through exchange of expertise, capacity building, and resource mobilisation.

In the First ASEAN Plus Japan Ministerial Meeting on Sports (1st AMMS+Japan) held in 2017, four priority areas of cooperation were agreed on: (i) development of physical education teachers and coaches, (ii) increasing participation of women in sports, (iii) advancing sports for persons with disabilities, and (iv) anti-doping campaign and capacity building. Building on the legacy of Tokyo 2020 Games and the emerging priority on sports industry and sports science, ASEAN and Japan will explore collaboration on sports management towards improving the contribution of sports to socio-economic development of ASEAN and its Member States.

ASEAN sports continues to strengthen cooperation with Dialogue Partners, by establishing a new sports cooperation mechanism with China through SOMS+China and AMMS+China, and with the Republic of Korea through the forthcoming implementation of a multi-year ASEAN-Korea FIELD Programme (Football Interpersonal Exchange and Leadership).

Next steps

Under Cambodia's 2022 ASEAN Chairmanship, ASEAN leaders adopted at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits in November 2022 the first two ASEAN declarations in sports cooperation, namely: (i) **ASEAN Declaration on Leveraging the Role of Sports in ASEAN Community Building and Achieving the SDGs**; and (ii) **ASEAN Declaration on Fostering ASEAN Identity through the Safeguarding of Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) in the Modern World**.

It is clear that since its establishment in 2011, the ASEAN sports sector has promoted healthy lifestyles and advocated for sports for socio-economic development and to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. The sector also contributes to the promotion of ASEAN values and identity, and the further consolidation of the ASEAN Community.

Some may say sports competitions are divisive as they can trigger spectator chaos, thus, it may negatively affect the way we nurture ASEAN Identity. However, seeing it from a broader perspective, sports do foster a sense of solidarity and develop integrity, as well as leadership—as they teach our communities sportspersonship principles and life skills that transcend different ages and socio-economic backgrounds. Sports teach us to become more resilient and how to enjoy the moment regardless of the winning or losing team.

These core values sports can offer will emerge as an exciting way to promote community integration and peace in the region. ASEAN will go deeper and broader in the game by exploring how sportspersonship can strengthen the spirit of unity in diversity and create socio-economic benefits for the peoples of ASEAN.

ASEAN WOMEN IN SPORTS AMBASSADORS

#WeScore Campaign

Hidilyn Diaz

Weightlifting

Hidilyn Diaz made history by becoming the first athlete to win an Olympic gold medal for the Philippines at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. She also set a new Olympic record for the 55-kg category of the women's weightlifting event. Previously, Hidilyn nabbed a silver medal at the Rio 2016 Olympics. Hidilyn again dominated at the 2022 World Weightlifting Championship in Bogota, Colombia, sweeping all three gold medals at stake.

Hidilyn's journey to the top was an uphill climb. As a young weightlifter, she had to grapple with gender stereotypes. She said people tended to look at

the sport as unfeminine and likely to lead to infertility. At the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, she recalled, "Weightlifting is known in the Philippines as a male-only sport. When I started doing weightlifting, many were not so supportive."

Hidilyn said women athletes like herself are showing that they can become the best at what they do. But she emphasised, "What we need is support not only when we're winning, but also during our preparation." She called for more opportunities for women to participate in sports.

Hidilyn Diaz competes in the women's 55kg weightlifting event, 2020 Summer Olympics, 26 July 2021, in Tokyo, Japan

Photo Credit: © AP Photo / Luca Bruno

Farah Ann Abdul Hadi

Gymnastics

Farah started her career in gymnastics at the early age of three and has won various medals throughout her career. She became only the third Malaysian gymnast to qualify for the Olympics with her participation at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

"Qualifying and competing at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, that's been a dream of mine since I was a little girl," said Farah at the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show.

"Tokyo 2020 Olympics was such an amazing opportunity for me and for Malaysia, to show that we are a strong country."

Farah cited the media's biased coverage of women gymnasts as one of the challenges she has faced. "As gymnasts, we are negatively talked about. Instead of praising our performance, they talk about our outfits or how we look," she said. "These are some of the barriers that I've tried to break, (to) bring more positive light to women in sports."

Farah Ann Abdul Hadi performs on the balance beam during the women's artistic gymnastic qualifications at the 2020 Summer Olympics, 25 July 2021, in Tokyo, Japan

Photo Credit: © AP Photo / Gregory Bull

Amita Berthier

Fencing

Amita is a left-handed foil fencer who represented Singapore at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. She is a three-time gold medalist at the Southeast Asian Games and was named the Women's Foil Athlete of the Year by the United States Fencing Coaches Association in May 2022.

At the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, Amita said gender shouldn't be a hindrance to playing a sport: "I think it's very important to never hold back on what you want to do. Just because you're born female doesn't mean that you shouldn't pursue sports and what you love to do."

Amita noted the importance of having a strong support system. "My parents had been an amazing core and foundation for me to pursue

my sport. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today. I think having a community and federations that encourage females to do the sports that they want to do can help a lot," she said.

Amita Berthier competes in the women's individual Foil round of 32 competition at the 2020 Summer Olympics, 25 July, 2021, in Chiba, Japan



Photo Credit: © AP Photo / Andrew Medichini

Pov Sokha

Vovinam

Pov Sokha, fondly called NaNa, is a world champion in vovinam. She has been practising vovinam since she was 13 years old, and has won the gold, silver, and bronze medals from the SEA Games and other international sporting events. She is excited for Cambodia to host the 32nd SEA Games in May 2023, and aims to make her parents and country proud by capturing another gold medal.

NaNa said one way of encouraging women to play a sport is to make women athlete role models become more visible. "It (ASEAN) can conduct more talk shows, like the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, to inspire and empower women, and to let communities and the world see that women also have their own abilities and perform at the highest level," she said.

NaNa believes that women athletes can be promoters of peace and stability. She said that sporting competitions are avenues for athletes from all nations to forge friendships and promote intercultural understanding.

Pov Sokha wishes to become a role model to inspire other women to play sports



Photo Credit: © Pov Sokha

Panipak Wongpattanakit

Taekwondo

Panipak Wongpattanakit is a two-time Olympic medalist in taekwondo (49-kg class), having won a gold medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and a bronze medal at the Rio 2016 Olympics. She is also among the top-ranked taekwondo players in the world, with two world championship titles under her belt and gold medals from various international events, such as the SEA Games.

Panipak recently added to her impressive record by winning three gold medals at the 2022 World Taekwondo Grand Prix and a bronze medal at the 2022 World Taekwondo Championships.

At the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, Panipak said her family is her inspiration to succeed. “Our father has motivated us since we were young and I started my sports career. My late mother passed away when I was seven years old, so my father is a single father,” she said.

Panipak said that sport has also opened a lot of doors for her. “We were not rich. Getting into sport helped support our family. And sport has taken me here today, to the day I won the gold medal. I did it for my family and country,” she said.

Panipak Wongpattanakit competes in the taekwondo women’s 49kg gold medal bout during the Summer 2020 Olympics, 24 July 2021, in Tokyo, Japan

Photo Credit: ©JAVIER SORIANO / Getty Images

Soulamphone Kerdla

Swimming

Soulamphone Kerdla is the head coach of the Lao PDR National Swim Team. Before her coaching assignment, Soulamphone was a swimmer who represented her country in various international sporting competitions.

At the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, Soulamphone said that girls will be encouraged to play a sport if they see it as something fun to do. She said, “When they know it’s fun, they’re going to want to come and play. Young girls in my country are not very confident to try hard things. Sports can be hard sometimes, but it can be fun. The first thing to do then is (to) show girls and women how fun it could be and make them love the sport.”

For women to become leaders in sports, Soulamphone believes they

should first understand sports. “I think we need to educate women and girls about sports. We need to give them opportunities to be in sports. Otherwise, they would not understand why we need sports,” she said.

Soulamphone Kerdla coaching an athlete during the Summer 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan

Photo Credit: ©Department of External Relations, Ministry of Education and Sports, the Lao PDR

Soe Soe Myar

Taekwondo

Soe Soe Myar was a national athlete who represented Myanmar and won a gold medal in taekwondo at the 2007 SEA Games. She currently serves as the deputy director of sports and physical education at the Ministry of Health and Sports. Soe Soe, who has been practising taekwondo since she was 11, developed an extensive national taekwondo programme in Myanmar.

At the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, Soe Soe said women athletes should encourage one another. “Women should have a seat at the table, share information with each other, and inspire each other. I actually became a referee because I was inspired by a woman referee from Thailand,” she said.

Soe Soe said that sports bring a lot of benefits. She said, “With sports, the first thing you will learn is punctuality because you cannot miss your game. Second, you will learn how to respect rules and diversity. You meet athletes from different cultures and regions. Third, you will learn how to become confident. Athletes gain confidence when they compete and this confidence is carried over to their social life and even after their career is over.”

Soe Soe Myar believes that women in sports should take the lead, be informed, and inspire each other

Photo Credit: © Soe Soe Myar

Tuyet Van Chau

Taekwondo

Tuyet Van Chau is a five-time gold medalist in taekwondo at the SEA Games. She has also won gold and silver medals at the World Championships. She started her martial arts training when she was six years old and became a member of Viet Nam’s national taekwondo team in 2009.

At the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, Tuyet Van talked about representing her country in a sport that she loves. She said, “It’s my first time winning a gold medal at the World Taekwondo Championships in Uzbekistan. I was happy and honoured to sing the national anthem of my county and see the Vietnamese flag when I stood on the podium. I never have any intention of leaving taekwondo.”

Tuyet Van Chau continues to train and compete, and says she will never give up taekwondo

Photo Credit: © International Cooperation Department, Viet Nam Sport Administration

HRH Princess 'Azemah Ni'matul Bolkiaah Binti His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiaah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah



Polo

Her Royal Highness Princess 'Azemah Ni'matul Bolkiaah is a world-class polo player and the first Bruneian woman to compete and win medals in the Torneo Internacional de Polo and at the SEA Games 2019 and 2017. Her leadership and determination in the very challenging sport of polo show her greatest strengths that have made her one of the leading female athletes in Brunei Darussalam.

Princess 'Azemah developed a passion for polo at a young age. So, she encourages girls and women athletes to follow their passion, to believe in themselves and rise to the challenge to make a difference. Princess 'Azemah says that polo gave her joy and made her a better person. "I have learned many great things over the years, such as trying to be a better teammate, learning how to win or lose gracefully,

furthering skills, and having grit and perseverance, which benefit all other areas of my life," she said during the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show. And today, that passion for polo continues by supporting nurturing young girls and boys to play polo in the Brunei Polo Academy started in 2018.

Throughout her involvement in high-performance sports, she has demonstrated her unwavering commitment and continuous support for the country's special needs programmes, such as breast cancer awareness, through polo charity programmes and fundraising events. She has a huge interest in motivating others to embrace a healthy lifestyle by having a space for fitness boutique called Shine Cycle to promote the benefits of regular exercises for fellow Bruneians and residents.

Princess 'Azemah believes that with hard work, persistence, and a strong support system, women athletes can achieve their goals

Photo Credit: ©Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Brunei Darussalam

Leani Ratri Oktila



Para-badminton

Leani Ratri Oktila is a top-notch badminton player who has won multiple gold medals at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and ASEAN 2015 Para Games. With tenacity, she overcame the childhood accident that left her with physical limitations and became part of Indonesia's national para-badminton team merely two years after her accident.

At the ASEAN #WeScore Talk Show, Leani talked about what the sport means to her. She said that when she was a kid, her parents had accepted that she may no longer become an athlete or a world champion, but had hoped that she would be healthy by doing sports.

With World Disability Day, Leani and her fellow para athletes feel that they

are appreciated and equal. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the events and competition schedules for para athletes were cancelled despite the continuation of the schedule for the non-para athletes. "For us para athlete, we often feel jealous of other athletes who don't have a disability," she said, wishing for equal opportunities for para athletes in the region.

Hary Susanto (right) and Leani Ratri Oktila (left) celebrate during in mixed doubles SL3-SU5 gold medal match at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, 5 September 2021, in Tokyo, Japan

Photo Credit: ©AP Photo / Kiichiro Sato

TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC MEDALISTS FROM ASEAN



GOLD MEDALISTS

SILVER MEDALISTS

BRONZE MEDALISTS

- Greysia Polli and Apriyani Rahayu**
Badminton (doubles)
Indonesia
- Hidilyn Diaz**
Weightlifting (55-kg class)
Philippines
- Panipak Wongpattanakit**
Taekwondo (49-kg class)
Thailand

- Eko Yuli Irawan**
Weightlifting (56-kg class)
Indonesia
- Azizulhasni Awang**
Cycling
Malaysia
- Nesthy Petecio**
Boxing (featherweight)
Philippines
- Carlo Paalam**
Boxing (flyweight)
Philippines

- Windy Cantika Aisah**
Weightlifting (49-kg class)
Indonesia
- Rahmat Erwin Abdullah**
Weightlifting (73-kg class)
Indonesia
- Anthony Sinisuka Ginting**
Badminton (singles)
Indonesia
- Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik**
Badminton (doubles)
Malaysia
- Eumir Marcial**
Boxing (middleweight)
Philippines
- Sudaporn Seesondee**
Boxing (lightweight)
Thailand

ASEAN MEMBER STATES' MEDAL TALLY IN OLYMPIC GAMES (AS OF 2020)

Indonesia	8	14	15
Malaysia	0	8	5
Philippines	1	5	8
Singapore	1	2	2
Thailand	10	8	17
Viet Nam	1	3	1
Total	21	40	48

ASEAN MEMBER STATES' MEDAL TALLY IN PARALYMPIC GAMES (AS OF 2020)

Indonesia	6	7	14
Lao PDR	0	0	1
Malaysia	6	4	6
Myanmar	2	3	2
Philippines	0	0	2
Singapore	5	2	4
Thailand	24	29	34
Viet Nam	1	2	2
Total	44	47	65

Sports Development Index A Fairer Approach to Measure Sports Development



Suyadi Pawiro

Assistant Deputy for Sports Partnership and Rewards, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Republic of Indonesia

The Sports Development Index (SDI) measures sports development by using a multi-dimensional approach. It is hoped that this index can promote positive changes in terms of health and well-being, as well as personal skills development and economic productivity.

Until recently, there has been no comprehensive study to measure the success of sports development. For example, England's Sports Equity Index (SEI) has a single indicator: community participation in sports (Sport England, 2002). SEI takes into account the socio-demographic background of those who engage in sports, including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status. Countries also use the medal tally as a parameter to gauge the success of sports (De Bosscher, Heyndels, De Knop, Van Bottenburg, & Shibli, 2008). Medals can be indicators of success, however, they do not reflect the whole picture. Therefore, sports development should also be measured in terms of how sports impact a community's socio-economic development and well-being.

The Indonesian government realises that measuring sports development in a more comprehensive and integrative way is not easy and may even invite debate, criticism, and challenges. Yet, action must be taken towards the continuous improvement of sports. Therefore, the government has set a national policy through Presidential Decree 86 year 2021 on Grand Design of National Policy (DBON), which mandates the utilisation of the Sport Development Index or SDI.

SDI is an instrument to measure and track sports development in Indonesia. The index uses a whole human dimension approach. It consists of nine dimensions as follows: 1) participation, 2) human resources of sport, 3) open space for sports activities, 4) fitness, 5) physical literacy, 6) economy, 7) personal development, 8) health, and 9) performance.

The SDI allows the government to obtain an integrative and holistic understanding of the Indonesian people—which is the end goal of

sports development. SDI covers not only the sports activities and development, but also the impact of sports on humans as a whole. The UN recognises that sports play an important role in SDGs.

SDI data collection was done through a multistage random sampling technique (Maksum, 2018) that combined stratified random sampling and cluster sampling. The method used aimed to ensure that the respondents were representative of the characteristics of the Indonesian population.

Based on the 2020 census, Indonesia's population is composed of about 270.20 million people (BPS, 2021) spread over 34 provinces, 514 regencies/cities, and 82,820 villages. The respondents were between the ages of 10 and 60 which represent nearly 73 per cent of the total population. The ages were divided into three categories, i.e., 10-19 years old (22 per cent of the population), 20-44 years old (53 per cent), and 45-60 years old (25 per cent).

As stated in the SDI report, the SDI for 2021 stands at 0.408, which is considered low on a scale of 0-1. Of the nine dimensions of SDI, human resources of sport and physical fitness obtained the lowest scores. The ratio of available human resources for sports to the total population is 1:3,487. In terms of fitness, 53.63 per cent are "least" fit, 22.68 per cent are "less" fit, and only 5.86 per cent were categorised as being in "very good" and "excellent" physical condition. In addition, the prevalence of excess overweight nationally is at 27 per cent—men at 20.3 per cent and women at 33.9 per cent.

The ratio of open space for sport (activity) to the population is 1.78 square meters per person, still far from the ideal of 3.5 square meters per person. Of the existing open space, 86 per cent is outdoors, and 14 per cent is indoors. In terms of ownership

status, 60 per cent belongs to the government, 16 per cent is owned by the private sector, and 24 per cent is individually-owned.

Physical literacy is in the medium-low range, registering at 0.565. Although sports/physical activities are carried out by 81.2 per cent of community members, the active participation rate is only 32.83 per cent. There is also a wide participation gap between men (35.7 per cent) and women (21.4 per cent).

Personal development is also in the medium-low range at 0.54. It indicates that those who exercise have better resilience and social capital compared to those who do not. For the dimension of public health, the result is low, at 0.41. The coefficient of physical health is 2.72, and psychological well-being is 2.66 on a 1-5 scale.

Nationally, the sports performance index of 0.385 is low. There is a fairly wide gap between Java and outside Java in terms of medal count, which shows a strong correlation between the availability of resources and the number of medals gained.

The report shows that 56 per cent, or around 110.45 million people, spend their money on sports-related needs. The spending ranges from 200,000 to 5,000,000 Indonesian rupiah per person per year. If these figures are aggregated, it is estimated the amount of spending for sports-related needs can reach up to 43.8 trillion rupiah per year.

This report proves that exercise positively impacts fitness, physical health, psychological well-being, resilience, and social capital. However, the empirical evidence shows that this index needs to be strengthened with field experiments to incorporate economic and community development aspects.

Study

People in ASEAN Need to be More Active



Asahi Takano

Partner and Head of Asia Pacific,
Portas Consulting



Jhoshan Jothilingam

Advisor, Portas Consulting

Physical activity undertaken through travel, work, and leisure has significant mental and physical health benefits. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), people who are insufficiently active are at a higher risk of death by 20-30 per cent compared to those who are active. Active adults are those with 150+ minutes of moderate-intensity equivalent activity per week and youth with at least 60+ minutes of moderate-intensity equivalent activity per day.

Yet, despite the benefits, a considerable proportion of the population remains insufficiently active, highlighting the need to address inactivity and improve social, economic, and health outcomes.

The *ASEAN Survey on Sports Participation* was undertaken in 2021 across all ASEAN Member States to examine physical activity in the region and understand people's motivations, behaviours, and barriers to physical activity. The regional survey assessed more than 15,000 respondents (over 1,500 in each Member State), and the results were analysed using the

Active Citizens Worldwide (ACW) approach. COVID-19 restrictions may have affected the respondents' answers, but insights from the report still provide baseline indicators of the issues involved and opportunities for interventions.

The results demonstrate a significant opportunity to improve activity behaviours within the region where only 65 per cent of the population is considered active. The research indicates a gender gap with 10 per cent fewer women meeting activity requirements. This gap is even higher in smaller cities. The research also

notes lower activity rates among the youth, with only 35 per cent active, and seniors, with only 55 per cent active.

Low rates of activity were recorded even if 80 per cent of the respondents enjoyed taking part in an exercise or sport, 77 per cent believed they should be doing more activity, 89 per cent was motivated by the physical health benefits, and 72 per cent was motivated by the mental health benefits. These figures demonstrate a disconnect between people's awareness and intentions versus their actual behaviour. The finding presents

a key public policy concern given the risks and societal impacts from inactivity.

The study also found additional themes throughout ASEAN:

- **Barriers:** Twenty-nine per cent of the respondents cite the lack of time as a barrier, while 23 per cent said it was the lack of facilities;
- **Gender gaps:** The gender gap was particularly pronounced in participation in team sports with almost one in five women partaking in team sports versus more than half of men;
- **Team sport:** Youth that participate in both individual and team sports are more active than those who participate in just individual activities or just team sports;
- **Lifetime behaviour:** Active youth, and those that are encouraged by others or that have active families, are noticeably more active later in life;
- **Social interaction:** Over three in five take part in an activity with other people, however this rate declines with age, particularly among men. There is a divergence between seniors wanting to be active with others, but fewer actually doing so, highlighting social considerations in physical activity;
- **COVID-19 impact:** COVID-19 had a significant impact on activity with

nearly one in two doing less activity, with youth being the most affected;

- **Community spirit:** Sport is a great source of community development and pride with 80 per cent believing that sport can bring different social groups together; and
- **Active travel:** Active travel is an important contributor to activity rates, with over a third of adults in larger cities meeting physical activity requirements through active travel alone. This contrasts to smaller cities where no more than 15 per cent of any age group met the requirements purely through active travel.

Some considerations for ASEAN Member States to improve physical activity:

- **Communication** needs to be enhanced to provide people with a better understanding of health benefits and opportunities for physical activity
- **Solutions** are required to fit activities around the schedules of people with time constraints to undertake physical activity
- **Physical activities** provide social benefits, but this interaction sometimes needs to be fostered. Those who are encouraged to be active by others are much more likely to be active, yet a large proportion of people undertake activity alone despite preferences

- **Targeted programmes** are needed to close the persistent gender gap in activity rates and encourage women into activities (particularly team sports) that fit into their lifestyles
- **Sporting federations** should be encouraged to develop programmes for specific demographics, particularly those that are underrepresented (such as women and seniors), to aid in activity development
- **An engagement strategy** for youth participation in activities is needed to ensure positive lifetime behaviours, including taking a holistic approach to physical wellbeing
- **Facilities** are an important enabler for physical activity rates, however, there needs to be understanding of demand and utilisation, and subsequent investment, to ensure people feel they have access to safe, affordable, and fit-for-purpose facilities nearby to satisfy their activity requirements
- **Active travel** should be encouraged and facilitated as a key driver for physical activity, with infrastructure developed appropriately (such as footpaths, bike paths, and end of trip facilities)

Thus, while there are positive foundational elements, there are also opportunities to improve physical activity rates across ASEAN through targeted interventions and cooperation.

Viet Nam will make its FIFA Women's World Cup debut this 2023

FIFA

Determined to Untap the Huge Potential of Women's Football

FIFA International Relations and Public Affairs Department

If you want to see how far women's football has progressed in the last few years, you need to look no further than the ASEAN region, where Viet Nam and the Philippines have made history by qualifying for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023—the first time that either will play at a senior men's or women's FIFA World Cup. Thailand, who played at the 2015 and 2019 tournaments, could join them by qualifying via an interzonal playoff in February.

Photo Credit: © TED ALJIBE / Getty Images



Sarai Bareman is the first-ever Chief Women's Football Officer for FIFA

Indeed, this is a very encouraging moment for women's football around the world. In July 2022, we enjoyed the UEFA Women's Euro 2022 in England, the WAFCON 2022 in Morocco, the 2022 CONCACAF W Championship in Mexico and the United States and the Copa América Femenina 2022 in Colombia. The FIFA Women's World Rankings features 181 member associations (MAs) out of a possible 211, a new record. Attendances have been growing everywhere, including the ASEAN region, where 16,000 watched host Viet Nam beat Thailand at the Southeast Asian Games finals in May last year.

The development of women's football has been a priority for FIFA since Gianni Infantino was elected President in 2016. One of his first moves was to set up the Women's Football Division, headed by Sarai Bareman, a former Samoa international, who became the first-ever Chief Women's Football Officer for FIFA.

"Women's football is the single biggest growth opportunity in football today, including in the ASEAN region," she said. "As the women's game continues to grow, I know that this year's FIFA Women's World Cup, the first to feature 32 teams and the first to be hosted in the Asia Pacific region, will take the women's game to new heights. But there is still a long way to go, and FIFA is investing with dedicated funding, resources, and tailor-made development programmes to continue to accelerate the growth of women's football."

In 2018, FIFA launched its Women's Football Strategy to grow participation, increase revenue, and lay solid foundations on which to build the future of the game. One of its aims was to have at least 60 million women and girls playing football by 2026.

Meanwhile, the FIFA Women's Development Programme aims to provide all 211 MAs with the opportunity to apply for and access additional resources and specialist

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Women's football
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SECTION 03

THE FIFA WOMEN'S COACH MENTORING MODEL

THE MENTORING PROCESS

expertise to develop women's football at a national level.

Women's football is also at the centre of FIFA's ground-breaking Talent Development Scheme, which aims to raise the standard of global football by ensuring that MAs make the most of the talent available in their country. Starting from 2023, MAs who apply and are accepted into the scheme will receive tailor-made assistance from a team of FIFA high-performance experts and technical consultants. In addition to helping identify talent, FIFA will give advice on raising coaching standards and providing more opportunities to play competitive football.

The promotion of inclusive participation in football, particularly of women, is one of the key priorities of the Memorandum of Understanding which FIFA and ASEAN signed in Bangkok in 2019. This is geared towards increasing the number of women and girls playing sports in the ASEAN region, encouraging women's

leadership in sports, and providing them more access to sports in safe environments. Further to this, the two jointly held a Women's Football Development Workshop in 2021.

FIFA has implemented a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual abuse and will remove anyone from the game who is found guilty of such misconduct. FIFA has introduced a Safeguarding Toolkit for MAs and the FIFA Guardians programme, to help the MAs prevent any harm to children. Child safeguarding in football is another priority area of collaboration under the ASEAN-FIFA memorandum of understanding.

However, there is still a long way to go. Growth has been uneven, and the FIFA Women's World Cup has been dominated by the United States and a handful of European teams. While some nations have extensive structures in place and are professionalising women's football, most women's football players and leagues around the world are

still amateur—something that was underlined by FIFA Women's Football Survey 2019 and FIFA Benchmarking Report: Women's Football.

That is why FIFA will keep working with MAs to help develop women's football from the grassroots level upwards. This means developing strong, sustainable leagues where players can be in a competitive professional environment and participate on a regular, long-term basis; and putting in place strong governance and commercial structures that enable these leagues to fulfil their potential. Club licensing is seen by FIFA as a key tool as it obliges clubs to raise their standards in strategic areas before they are allowed to compete.

Together with FIFA's own competitions and the continental competitions, these initiatives can help bring women's football into the mainstream, where it belongs.

Advocating for Clean Sport in ASEAN



Gobinathan Nair
Director General
Southeast Asia Regional Anti-Doping Organization

Sports have always played an integral role in the lives of the people of ASEAN—whether as a way to maintain a healthy lifestyle, develop and enhance one’s physical and psychomotor skills, or perform at an elite level. Sports have also created a platform for healthy competition and for strengthening bonds among ASEAN athletes, athlete support personnel, and other sports stakeholders through formal sports events, such as the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games, ASEAN Para Games, ASEAN University Games, and ASEAN Schools Sports Competitions. Beyond these competitions, ASEAN Member States have also hosted major sports events both at the Asian regional and international levels.

Ensuring that everyone competes in a fair and clean manner is necessary to the success of all competitions at these sporting events. This entails playing by the rules of the game and eliminating any unfair advantage via the consumption of performance enhancement drugs.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was established in 1999 to uphold

a level playing field in sports. An international independent agency funded by the sport movement and governments of the world, WADA developed the World Anti Doping Code (Code), including seven international standards, to serve as the overall guide on all anti-doping matters. As governments cannot be legally bound by a non-governmental document like the Code, an international convention (International Convention against Doping in Sport) under the auspices of UNESCO was developed to allow the formal acceptance of WADA and the Code. All ASEAN Member States have ratified the convention.

WADA, in its efforts to strengthen the protection of clean sport and provide support to countries, created the Regional Anti-Doping Organization (RADO) programme in 2004. The programme currently has 12 RADOs covering 119 countries. One of these is the Southeast Asia Regional Anti-Doping Organization (SEARADO) which was formed in 2006. SEARADO has been based in Singapore since 2011 with support from the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Singapore.

Presently, SEARADO’s strategic objectives are as follows: Compliance and Programme Development; Capacity Building; and Engagement. Over the years, SEARADO, with the support of all member countries in ASEAN, have rolled out various initiatives to achieve the goals set out under these strategic objectives.

SEARADO has assisted many Member States in setting up their National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) and is proud to mention that all ASEAN Member States now have NADOs to spearhead the anti-doping drive. Following the set up of these NADOs, SEARADO ensured that each Member State’s NADO rules are in compliance with the Code as revised in 2015 and 2021.

In the area of programme development, SEARADO assisted Member States in applying for UNESCO’s Fund for the Elimination of Doping. This has resulted in a total of eight national projects and two regional projects. The first regional project involved the setting up of an Anti-Doping outreach booth at the 2013 SEA Games in Myanmar, a pioneering effort that helped raise



awareness about anti-doping among athletes and support personnel. Following this, countries hosting the subsequent Games have included an outreach booth as part of the Organising Committee's effort to create greater awareness on anti-doping. The second regional project involved the training of Doping Control Officer (DCO) Trainers in 2014/2015. These DCO Trainers have been responsible for the training of many DCOs in the region. They have performed well in their roles and have also been involved in key positions at major games, including the recent Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

SEARADO has also been involved in other areas of programme development such as governance and education. ASEAN Member States are constantly provided advice in the area of governance to ensure there is no conflict of interest in the setup of key committees, such as Results Management and Therapeutic Use Exemption committees. SEARADO is proud to note that all ASEAN Member States have now established these committees.

In the area of education, SEARADO has facilitated the translation of various

education brochures, pamphlets, and e-learning modules into languages in the region. This has been crucial with the introduction of the International Standard for Education (ISE) that emphasises the need for athletes to be first introduced to anti-doping via education before they are exposed to testing.

In terms of capacity building, courses, workshops, and seminars have also been held to train personnel in the areas of testing; therapeutic use exemption; results management education and intelligence; and investigation. In 2022, a total of 11 webinars were held for the Member States.

All of these efforts would not have been possible without the support of WADA and other key partners, including the Japan Anti-Doping Organization (JADA) with whom SEARADO has a memorandum of understanding signed thrice over the last 10 years. JADA has been a key partner in collaborating with SEARADO to support Member States.

SEARADO has also been engaging the regional games organisers, Southeast Asian Games Federation (SEAGF) and

ASEAN Para Sports, to ensure that games are held in line with the Code and best practices in anti-doping are adopted during the games. Early this year, SEARADO played a pivotal role in the signing of the ASEAN-WADA memorandum of understanding to explore greater collaboration and support in enhancing governance and programmes to further the efforts in clean sport. This major milestone for ASEAN sports took place under Singapore's role as chairperson of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports.

Moving forward, SEARADO hopes to continue to engage governments and stakeholders. It hopes for NADOs to receive greater support in terms of resources and budget to be able to roll out programmes and as such, support SEARADO's vision of championing clean sport in Southeast Asia.

For more information about SEARADO, please check out the following link:



<https://www.searado.com/about/about-searado/>

ASEAN PARA SPORTS FEDERATION

Driving the Equality and Inclusivity Agenda

Photo Credit: © AP Photo/Shuji Kajiyama

Thai boccia player Pornchok Larpyen took home the silver medal in the individual BC-4 event at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games



Naser Wahab

Media and Communications Director, ASEAN Para Sports Federation

It started with a noble idea to provide persons with disability (PWDs) with a competitive platform to excel in life through sports, apart from strongly driving the message of equality and inclusivity.

Through sports, negative stigma and perceptions associated with physical disabilities can be reduced by highlighting their skills and achievements instead of their disabilities. Sports help promote inclusivity and positive interaction between PWDs and the abled community. It can help others gain a better understanding of the needs of PWDs, allowing them to excel without discrimination, and foster harmony. Sports help change the lives of para athletes and empower them to realise their full potential and advocate for change in society.

The ASEAN Para Sports Federation (APSF), through its flagship event, the ASEAN Para Games, aims to change all the negative stigma and discrimination associated with being a PWD. It was based on these principles and tenets that the formation of the APSF and the creation of the ASEAN Para Games came to fruition in 2001.

The idea to form a recognised regional body for para sports and the ASEAN Para Games was mooted by then APSF president Datuk Zainal Abu Zarin of Malaysia in 1998 and was well received by the 10 Member States of ASEAN in 2001.

“

APSF continues to progress and has succeeded in overcoming many challenges, cementing its position as a strong and dynamic organisation.

The APSF has also been championing the empowerment of women in sports. It has been guiding and helping women and girls with disabilities to be active in sports, through related organisations and the National Paralympic Committees (NPCs) in their respective countries, to help increase their self-confidence and raise their standing in societies.

Fast forward today, APSF has evolved into one of the most active regional paralympic bodies that promote para sports and participation of athletes at the highest level in this region. True to the spirit of the ASEAN Community and armed with the vision of providing equal opportunities in sports and life for para athletes, the ASEAN Para Games was modelled to be a platform to strive for the development of ASEAN Community and has become part of ASEAN's socio-movement, aiming to build a better ASEAN Community. It is for that reason that APSF was recognised by ASEAN as an affiliate organisation and accorded the Civil Society Organisation status.

APSF continues to progress and has succeeded in overcoming many challenges, cementing its position as a strong and dynamic organisation. The federation acts as a governing body for all 10 Member States comprising National Paralympic Committees of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Timor-Leste is part of the federation but as a provisional member.

The ASEAN Para Games was successfully held for the first time in Kuala Lumpur in 2001, albeit on a small scale. Eleven editions of the ASEAN Para Games have since been staged in Ha Noi, Manila, Nakhon Ratchasima, Kuala Lumpur, Naypyidaw and Solo. In 2023, for the first time, Phnom Penh will host the 12th edition of the Games, which will see the participation of more than 2000 athletes and officials from all 11 countries including the federation's provisional member Timor-Leste.

Chess para athletes and team at the 2022 ASEAN Para Games in Solo.



It has been a long and arduous journey for APSF which is currently helmed by two-term president, Major General Osoth Bhavilai of Thailand. “It has been a long and challenging journey, full of obstacles... but we continue to persevere and remain united in ensuring that the Games continue to be held every two years for the benefit of our athletes,” said Maj Gen Bhavilai.

The APSF prides itself as a non-profit organisation truly championing the cause of para athletes, with professional volunteers running its secretariat in Bangkok. “Despite our limitations in human resource and funds, we managed to ensure that the Games are held every two years, strictly adhering to international standards and protocols in all areas,” he added.

Having professional volunteers in various functional areas such as in

sports, technical areas, anti-doping, medical, classification, media, communications, marketing and sponsorships, legal, and protocols contributed greatly to the successful operation of APSF thus far. It also ensures that the ASEAN Para Games are held according to the international standards and requirements.

“The greatest challenge now is to have a strong human resource structure, a team of passionate volunteers, supporters and sponsors who have the same mindset and values practised by APSF,” said Maj Gen Bhavilai.

Over the past few years, APSF faced bigger challenges, including the pulling out of two host cities of the ASEAN Para Games due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2019 ASEAN Para Games in Manila and Ha Noi in 2021 were cancelled due to the pandemic, as with other major sporting events.

However, in the true spirit of ASEAN camaraderie and solidarity, and to ensure the continuity of the Games, Indonesia willingly stepped up to replace Ha Noi as the host of the 11th ASEAN Para Games this year.

“It was indeed a successful and great Games as Solo hosted the Games for the second time since 2011. It truly shows the undying spirit of togetherness amongst ASEAN nations, befitting our motto of ASEAN Moving Together. For that, APSF and the ASEAN Paralympic fraternity are forever thankful to the government of Indonesia,” said Maj Gen Bhavilai.

With the new year, greater challenges await. But Maj Gen Bhavilai has full belief that, along with the support of all 10 Member States and the region’s para community, the APSF is able and ready to weather whatever obstacles and challenges lie ahead.

About ASEAN Para Sports Federation (APSF)



Formally established in 2001, APSF is the governing body of the Paralympic Movement in Southeast Asia with 10 member states forming the organisation. Currently headquartered in Bangkok, APSF is committed to enabling athletes with a disability in the region to achieve sporting excellence.

About ASEAN Para Games

The ASEAN Para Games is a biennial multi-sports para event held after every Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) for

athletes with disabilities from the ASEAN Member States. Kuala Lumpur hosted the first edition in 2001, followed by Ha Noi, Viet Nam (2003), Manila, the Philippines (2005), Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand (2007), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2009), Solo, Indonesia (2011), Naypyidaw, Myanmar (2014), Singapore (2015), Kuala Lumpur (2017), and Solo, Indonesia (2022). The Manila Games, supposed to take place in January 2020, was cancelled due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from promoting friendship and solidarity amongst athletes in the region through sports, the Games hope to develop and promote sports for the differently-abled, apart from rehabilitating and creating a more inclusive society.

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Photo Credit: © Jasper Belarmino Rom

Physical Education and Inclusion

A workshop to improve the quality of physical education and promote sports for people with disabilities takes off



Yu Shishido
Research Fellow
Nippon Sport Science University

After delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the first online workshop focusing on the promotion of ASEAN Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) and Sports for People with Disabilities (SPD) was held from 14 to 18 February 2022.

The workshop resulted from an agreement made at the ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Sports in 2017, as part of the ASEAN-Japan Actions on Sports Phase II programme. Nippon Sport Science University (NSSU) organised the workshop with the support of

the ASEAN Secretariat, with the aim of establishing a collaborative relationship and a sustainable ASEAN-Japan network/community on PETE and SPD. This event replaced an initially scheduled face-to-face event, so the implementation and participation in this remote workshop was a new and significant challenge for the 10 ASEAN Member States and Japan.

There were more than 30 participants from the ASEAN Member States and Japan, consisting of government officials, and representatives from sports federations who were officially nominated for the programme by each Member State. Japanese professors with expertise in PETE or SPD, besides physical education itself, gathered online to share information, opinions through presentations and

discussions in the context of each AMS. Then, with the aim to promote interaction and communication among the participants, a Member State moderated another Member State's presentation.

Interactive lectures were given by Prof. Dr. Yoshinori Okade, Professor of NSSU and Project Leader, on how to develop effective action plans which will enhance relevant policies and existing systems in PETE/SPD in each Member State. He shared the following documents as references: The Berlin Agenda for Action for Government Ministers (1999, ICSSPE), Kazan Action Plan (2017, MINEPS V), and The Antananarivo Recommendations (2019, UNESCO).

Likewise, a lecture focusing on the theme of Sports for Persons with Disabilities, titled "Teaching



Photo Credit: ©ASEAN Secretariat

Physical Education for Students with Disabilities in Inclusion,” was offered by Prof. Dr. Takahiro Sato and Prof. Dr. Shinichi Nagata from the University of Tsukuba.

On the last day of the workshop, Member States presented the Action Plans they developed themselves, and received feedback and suggestions from other participants and professors, in addition to on-the-spot Q & A sessions. It was worthwhile to note that the Action Plans of some Member States were aimed at quality PETE, incorporating the concept of SPD, e.g., the development of PE teacher competencies for the inclusion of students with disabilities in the same PE classes.

Also, the Japanese experts recommended that all ASEAN Member States make continuous efforts to share information and skills obtained during the workshop, including their draft Action Plan, with colleagues, superiors, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, they encouraged the

delegates to seek consensus on the content of the Action Plan from the relevant ministries, launch its implementation, and maintain collaborative relationships at the organisational level.

In the closing ceremony, Rodora T. Babaran, Director of Human Development Directorate of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department, on behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat, remarked that ASEAN-Japan cooperation on sports has brought new perspectives, updated information, and created opportunities to exchange experience, knowledge, and skills across a wide range of areas.

Meanwhile, Prof. Dr. Okade emphasised that the project must continue to keep up with the progress of each Action Plan, monitor its process, offer advice, and support the participants, as needed. He referred to the importance of strengthening the foundation for quality Physical Education Teacher Education and Sports for Persons with Disabilities that can eventually

contribute to children's growth and education in ASEAN.

At the end of the event, many participants provided positive feedback on the workshop saying that they could identify their own country's issues on PETE/SPD from objective viewpoints, by knowing the obstacles that the other Member States confront. Through the activities, they could also construct the basis for sustainable partnerships between the ASEAN Member States and Japan. According to the results of the questionnaire conducted afterwards, it is worth reporting that almost all Member States-participants were satisfied with the content, information, skills, Action Plans, and new relationships they formed during the entire workshop. This is a starting point in the process of producing viable outcomes in each Member State, enhancing the network, and building PETE/SPD communities in ASEAN that should be accomplished through more activities planned in the future.



Kholidin

Archery Para Athlete



Ixora Tri Devi

*Staff Writer, The ASEAN
ASEAN Socio-Cultural
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One day, just three days before Eid-Al-Fitr in 2017, Kholidin fell off a 9-meter-tall coconut tree. As he was lying on the ground, he conceded his destiny to God. He prayed that if he still had time left on earth, he wanted to be a valuable man.

Kholidin had just discovered a new hobby—archery—but the fall would cost him his right hand.

“It was Ramadan. I went back to my hometown in Pekalongan (Central Java). I was longing for some fresh coconut water for Iftar. I ended up climbing a coconut tree in my garden. I lost my grip when I tried to get rid of a colony of ants. I fell from a height of nine meters. My family immediately took me to the hospital. Unfortunately, I felt unbearable pain in my right hand after a week. The infection was spreading. They needed to amputate my right hand”, narrates Kholidin.

Five years after that fateful day, the 45-year-old porridge vendor stood on the ASEAN Para Games 2022 podium to receive his first gold medal in recurve men’s open doubles. He also bagged silver in mixed team recurve

and bronze for the men’s individual recurve open at the archery events.

“I left Pekalongan and headed to Jakarta in 1994 to sell chicken porridge. At first, I could only sell up to four bowls of porridge a day. I sold it for 300 rupiahs. Thank God I never went hungry. I did, however, eat a lot of porridge during those times. Bubur Ayam Bang Udin, my cart, grew in popularity over time. College students and employees of radio stations that worked in Sarinah (Central Jakarta) became my regulars. Now, I have four staff. Some of them have been working with me for 15-20 years. I am grateful.”

Kholidin was 39 when he discovered archery in 2016, and he was immediately hooked. After just three months, he joined Focus Archery Sports Team (FAST) in Pulomas, North Jakarta. Kholidin soon enjoyed his new routine: selling chicken porridge in the morning; archery training in the afternoon.

“My first introduction to archery was through my little brother. He suggested I try archery because futsal, my previous hobby, was taking a toll on my body. I tried it, and I embraced it right off the bat. After three months of training, I started to join local competitions. I won my first competition on my initial try. In 2017, I won the Piala Presiden (President Cup). That was just before the accident.”

Kholidin’s disability did not stop him from pursuing his passion for his chosen sport. It didn’t take long for him to pick up his bow and arrow again.

“Three weeks after the accident, I began to walk again. I went to the archery club to cheer myself up. I could not fathom my eagerness to do archery again. At home, I asked my son to help me put on the bow. We went upstairs, where we usually hang the clothes dry. I tried to pull the arrow with the help of a rope and the strength of my front teeth. The arrow successfully landed on the target. I was elated. I tried so many times that I could not eat for three days because of a toothache. Now, I use my molars and shield to protect my teeth.”

Kholidin mastered this new technique immediately. In 2018, the Asian Para Games archery team conducted

training at Kholidin’s club. One of the coaches noticed Kholidin and suggested that he train with a recurve bow recognised by international championships. Kholidin followed his suggestion. As a result, he was selected to join the Jakarta official para-archery team in the same year.

“Under the guidance of Coach Denny from the Jakarta team, I flew to Nové Město nad Metují in the Czech Republic. It was the Para-Archery World Ranking Event 2021 and the Final Paralympic Qualification 2021. I ranked seventh in the Recurve Men Open Qualification Round. When I returned, they put Coach Denny and me on the National Team.”

As a member of the Indonesian National Para-archery team, Kholidin competed against other athletes from across Southeast Asia in the ASEAN Para Games 2022. According to him, his competitors were nothing but remarkable.

“Five members of the Thai team were all regulars at the Paralympics, also one from Malaysia. I did not even get the ticket to compete at the Paralympics! It was so intense to compete against them. I was in disbelief when I won because, according to statistics, I was below them. Nonetheless, I am proud to have won medals while representing my country.”

Looking at how enthusiastic his fellow athletes were at the 2022 ASEAN Para Games, the father of two and husband of Neni Handayani asked for ASEAN’s commitment to maintaining this valuable space.

“Competitions are the only place we can meet, compare, and measure our hard work. Why should we give our all at training if there is no competition? During the ASEAN Para Games in August, all my fellow para athletes were enthusiastic. I hope ASEAN consistently keeps this precious space, especially for para athletes.”

Kholidin’s passion for archery will not be doused anytime soon. With support from his faithful wife, children, coaches, and a dedicated dentist, Kholidin’s next goal is the Paralympics. He cannot wait to compete among the world’s best athletes.



Jasper Belarmino Rom

Chess Para Athlete



Ixora Tri Devi

Staff Writer, *The ASEAN*

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department

Fifty-year-old Jasper was born with a congenital deformity in his legs. Until high school, his friends and families would help him move around and commute. He started using a wheelchair after he was selected to represent his school and city more regularly in competitions. Thus, accessibility was one of his most crucial factors in choosing a college.

Initially, Jasper wanted to become a lawyer, but unfortunately, the law school did not have facilities for persons with disabilities. So instead, he chose the University of San Carlos Technological Center for its accessibility and opted for a degree in electronics and communications engineering. It turned out that the school had a strong chess team. He was ultimately selected as a member of the varsity team and helped the team win inter-collegiate chess titles from 1990-1994.

During college, Jasper also managed to build a chess club. Supported by the city, the Mabini Chess Club was established to provide chess training and development for kids in his neighbourhood. Although the club is defunct, training the aspiring youth remains one of Jasper's proudest achievements.

"Many of these kids went on to become scholars in college by being varsity chess players or excelling in academics. Many of them are successful, partly because of the chess learnings they had which include critical thinking, discipline, patience, and having a strong determination. That is quite fulfilling on my part and I am proud of what they have achieved."

Balancing work and chess

Jasper attained another milestone in 2000 when he gained the highest local title: Chess National Master. Two years later, he got a scholarship to pursue his master's degree in Public Policy at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. In between studies, he would play chess occasionally, and gained a US National Master chess title in the process. After finishing his graduate studies, he focused on his work in the project management field in the Philippines and Thailand.

Although his time is devoted to his work and family, he followed the chess world from the sidelines. As he said, "when you start to play chess—and love it—it stays with you. You find time to play again if there is an opportunity."

During a family vacation in Thailand in 2017, where he was also playing in the Bangkok Chess Open, Jasper unexpectedly saw his break for a major competition. At the event, he reunited with the members of the Philippines national para chess team, some of whom were also his teammates back in 2000. They asked if Jasper would like to join the team for the 2018 Asian Para Games in Jakarta, Indonesia. The father of two hesitated, but when he moved to Jakarta later the following year to work in the ASEAN Secretariat, he finally said yes. Perhaps it was destiny.

Using sports to advocate inclusion

At the 2018 Asian Para Games, Jasper helped the team bag two golds in the

1974 was a historic year for chess lovers all over the Philippines. 22-year-old Filipino, Eugene Torre, became the first Asian grandmaster after winning the silver medal at the 21st Chess Olympiad in Nice, France. His monumental legacy undeniably became an inspiration for chess players across generations, including Jasper Belarmino Rom.

Jasper played his first set when he was twelve after picking notes from his uncle. It was the 80s, and chess fever was far from over. Every weekend, residents in Jasper's neighbourhood in Danao City, Cebu, would gather and play the game for fun.

Over time, Jasper's affection for the game grew. His father recognised it and gave him Torre's biography, *Beyond the 13th Move*. "It was my first book in chess given by my father," he said.

"I was 15 when I started winning in a city tournament. When I was 16, I won the regional competition and represented my school in a national youth game. My competitors were all non-disabled. I was the only one in a wheelchair to represent our region."

Chess: An everyday board game for communities across the region

Stephan Hillyer Levitt wrote in 1991 that the game of chess appears to have been modified from the Indian game of *caturanga* in the 6th century A.D. Levitt explained that chess was introduced from India to the Persian king Khusraw I Anushirwan. According to the indologist, the game reached the Middle East, Spain, and Byzantium when Persia was conquered by the Arabs. It was also possible, he said, that the Crusaders learned the game in the Middle East who further spread it throughout western Europe.

In modern Southeast Asia, chess is widespread across the region. It is not rare to find security guards playing the board game to beat boredom when tending their posts. It is also a typical game played by students during recess or sports festivals. In Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, the game is called *catur*.

According to the *Inventory of ASEAN Traditional Games and Sports (1998)*, the Malaysian version of chess was prevalent before the advent of the European game. The book cites that the difference between Malay and European chess is in the arrangements of the pieces, although the steps and power of the chess pieces are

also similar. For example, in European chess, the king stands opposite the king and the queen opposite the queen. In Malay chess, the minister (equivalent to a queen in a European game) stands on the right of his king, provided he has not been checked or moved.

On the other hand, Vietnamese like to take the game outside the board. *Co Ngooi*, or human chess, is Viets' beloved game, often part of village or temple festivals. *Hanoi Times* wrote that spectators of all ages always anticipate the game that showcases traditional dress, music, and martial arts.

As the game has a firm root in the region, it is no wonder that many chess players in ASEAN have become a force to be reckoned with on the global stage. Filipino Eugene Torre became the first grandmaster from Asia and the first Southeast Asian to be inducted in the prestigious World Chess Hall of Fame. He certainly will not be the last. Now, there are more grandmasters and international masters from the region, including Vietnamese Lê Quang Liêm, Indonesian Irene Kharisma, Malaysian Yeoh Li Tian, and many more.

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team category and won two bronzes in individual categories. At the 11th ASEAN Para Games 2022 held in Solo, Indonesia he again helped the team bag two golds in the team category and won one silver for the individual category.

Jasper's team has now been labelled as "Team Gold" by local media. But beyond the podium and medal ceremony, Jasper has a compelling message he wants to convey.

"When I play chess, there is an aspect of advocacy—an advocacy for equalisation of opportunities and inclusion through sports. Athletes with disabilities are very much capable to bring honour to their country and contribute to nation building. We must ensure that athletes with disabilities have access to sports and accessible facilities and are provided

the necessary support on an equal basis with other athletes, for them to be able to reach their full potential. They also would need access to proper training under supportive and skilled trainers and, of course, exposure to international events.

"ASEAN countries are very supportive to athletes with disabilities nowadays. I hope they will continue to provide opportunities for athletes with disabilities to shine. In supporting the athletes, they will produce results for their countries, which ASEAN as a region can be proud of."

Wearing another hat, as a part of the Programme Cooperation and Project Management Division of the ASEAN Secretariat, Jasper also encourages more organisations of persons with disabilities to come up with regional project proposals. Yet, as he recalled, less than 1 per cent of the ASEAN

Cooperation Projects submitted to ASEAN is related to disabilities.

"These projects would contribute to ASEAN's community building efforts, particularly on inclusion. They can submit a project that is related to inclusive sports, for example. After all, ASEAN is a community of opportunities. We should give opportunities to all, including persons with disabilities."

While continuing to advocate inclusivity through sport, Jasper is holding on tight to his dream: to be on the same level as his chess heroes.

"I used to dream about being a grandmaster. But maybe that can wait. Right now, my goal is just to play good chess to help the team win in upcoming competitions. Hopefully, by playing well, other good things will follow."

Jakarta International Stadium

How Universal Design Principles Promote Inclusivity in Sports

Timmy Setiawan, Architect, Unitri Cipta Consultant and *The ASEAN* Editorial Team

Attending sports matches and activities is a socio-cultural tradition in ASEAN. Therefore, it is essential that no segment of the population is excluded from these events on the basis of their disabilities. The increasing interest of ASEAN Member States to host major sports events has also made it necessary to ensure the accessibility and inclusivity of sports venues to all spectators.

For example, with the huge popularity of football in the region, stadiums should be made accessible for everyone interested in the sport. As a public facility, these venues should be designed according to local building codes and also adhere to every person's basic human right. They should be accessible and inclusive to both athletes and

spectators, particularly to people with special needs, such as those in wheelchairs, people with visual impairments, and people with hearing augmentations.

FIFA has established global guidelines for football stadiums that incorporate the principles of universal design and accessibility. The guidelines include standards and specifications for

transport areas and parking spaces, entrance areas (entrance of the facility, ticket counters, check-in, security gates), circulation areas (footpaths, ramps, stairways, surfaces), function and service areas (doorways, doors, elevators, service counters), seating spaces, toilet facilities, signages, and communication systems.

Paralympics athletes parade during the opening of ASEAN Para Games at Manahan Stadium, in Solo, Central Java, Indonesia



Photo Credit: ©Anadolu Agency / Getty Images

“

It should be possible for wheelchair users to gain entry to the stadium at all the entrances and get to their viewing positions without undue inconvenience either to themselves or to other spectators.

Design of facilities for PWD-spectators

Proper provisions should be made at all stadiums to accommodate the safety and comfort of spectators with disabilities. This should include good, unobstructed viewing facilities and ramps for wheelchairs, toilet facilities, and support services.

The quality of seating positions and ticket options should be varied to allow people with disabilities the same opportunities as abled spectators. It should be possible for wheelchair users to gain entry to the stadium at all the entrances and get to their viewing positions without undue inconvenience either to themselves or to other spectators. In ASEAN culture, PWDs in wheelchairs typically have caregivers with them; hence, there is a need to provide chair facilities or space for them as well.

Design of facilities for PWD-athletes (Para Games)

For athletes in wheelchair, the primary considerations are parking space access, ramps, a special elevator, and toilet facilities. For athletes with visual

impairments, designers should include a guide block and warning block on the floor, Braille signages, and voice warning systems. For athletes with hearing augmentation, visual signages, including and LED-board signages, should be provided.

With regard to the “athlete village,” designers must pay special attention to: emergency access and evacuation route, elevator capacity for wheelchairs, bathroom dimensions, and mechanical and electrical requirements, signages, among others.

Conclusion

Universal design for football stadiums and sport facilities is needed to achieve the accessibility and inclusivity of sports venues. To help ASEAN Member States in stadium design, there is a need to collect data on PWDs as spectators or athletes and coordinate with appropriate organisations. The stadium design must have a clear purpose and follow FIFA’s technical recommendations, building regulations by local authorities, and building permit requirements. Facilities for Para Games must also follow the rules and requirements set by the International Paralympic Committee.

Fostering ASEAN Identity Through the Safeguarding of Traditional Sports and Games in the Modern World



The ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN: Rising Above Challenges and Sustaining Growth (Ha Noi, June 2020) highlights the need for ASEAN to continue promoting a sense of belonging in the ASEAN Community. Increasing awareness of our shared values through people-to-people exchanges will foster this regional identity.

Sports can be a catalyst that brings ASEAN citizens together and provide opportunities for intercultural dialogue, cooperation, and the formation of a sense of community.

Hang Chuon Naron
Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports, Cambodia

A demonstration of the Cambodian's martial arts, Kun Lbokator, at the workshop

08-09, August 2021 Phnom Penh, Cambodia



Sports and cultural identity

Sports stimulate the development of basic human motor skills, but equally importantly, they are a clear expression of a society's cultural identity.

In particular, traditional sports reflect the values, characteristics, and way of life of a given group. They are an intangible cultural heritage and lie at the very foundation of our cultural traditions. Retaining knowledge of and practising traditional sports and games are vital to preserving them.

Traditional sports and games have been associated with the terms, old, exotic, and endangered (Groll et al., 2015; Bhattacharjee & Boro, 2018). But they are more than these: they can be viewed as a cultural capital, with athletes embodying the cultural characteristics of their society; as a social capital, with rules, symbols, and relationships mirroring those of one's community; or as a collective memory that can solidify a local, national, or regional identity (Groll et al., 2015).

Some traditional sports and games are gradually vanishing because only a few players still know and play them. Although some may still be popular in their respective countries, many games, especially those from indigenous cultures, have essentially disappeared. Those that have survived, according to Das and Chatterjee (2014), are "threatened with imminent extinction under the combined effect of globalisation and the harmonisation of the rich diversity of our world sports heritage."

Taking note of these concerns, UNESCO has been working to protect and promote traditional sports and games to further community spirit, bring people together, and instil a sense of pride in a society's cultural roots. Traditional sports and games are important in promoting cultural

diversity and protecting cultural identities at the local, national, and international levels.

The role of ASEAN Member States in fostering ASEAN identity

All ASEAN Member States have their respective traditional sports and games. A few of them (e.g. *sepak takraw*, *muay*) have been successfully introduced in sporting events, such as the Southeast Asian Games, and are now accepted as region-wide traditional sports.

ASEAN traditional sports and games can play an instrumental role in fostering an ASEAN identity. ASEAN Member States must promote traditional sports and games at local, national, and regional levels by:

- Doing research on and promoting the traditional sports and games of ASEAN
- Formulating strategies for the safeguarding of ASEAN traditional sports and games in the modern world
- Engaging ASEAN Dialogue Partners for traditional sports and games exchange programmes
- ASEAN Member States may also establish or strengthen the role of committees that work on the preservation of traditional sports in their own countries, collaborate towards the inclusion of ASEAN traditional sports in major sporting events, encourage children and youth to play these traditional sports, and strengthen multistakeholder partnership in preserving the ASEAN traditional sports and games through innovations in technology.

In addition, ASEAN Member States may utilise all types of media to promote traditional sports and games, and even develop potential ones. They can also integrate traditional sports and games in sporting events at all levels and incorporate them into the school curriculum.

Conclusion

According to Acharya (2021), identity is important because it "is key to building a community, whether economic, socio-cultural, or political-security varieties." Moreover, he said that identity is socially constructed, combining instrumental logic with habit-forming socialisation, norms, and institutions.

"The identity of ASEAN depends on how its members define their character and role in regional order in relation to others within and outside the region, and how they develop a 'we' feeling," said Acharya.

Traditional sports and games can help construct a distinct ASEAN identity and create a we-feeling. This is because they are part of our region's cultural heritage. Therefore, all ASEAN Member States need to safeguard and promote them.

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Traditional Sports and Games: Preserving ASEAN's Cultural Heritage



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The diversity of the ASEAN Community manifests in many forms, from the usual traditional arts or cuisines, to traditional sports and games. Traditional sports and games are an important part of each Member States' intangible cultural heritage. They serve as windows to our past and provide clues to societal values and norms. They showcase similarities and differences between Member States, drive intercultural dialogue, and promote peace and cooperation between and within our societies.

Contemporary society, however, seems to have forgotten many of these traditional sports and games. People's attention has shifted mostly to Western sports. Our own forms of sport will become extinct if ASEAN people, especially the youth, do not know or practice them. We all have a duty to increase people's appreciation for and carry out traditional sports and games to ensure its continuity within the ASEAN.

Driven by these concerns, Cambodia as ASEAN Chair in 2022, through its Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports convened two workshops on the preservation of traditional sports and games and state of sports and recreation zones development in ASEAN from 8 to 11 August 2022. ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Sports (SOMS) representatives, experts from relevant national agencies in ASEAN Member States, and representatives of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) attended the workshops.

The workshops provided valuable opportunities for sports practitioners to dive deep into ASEAN sports concerns and developments. For example, it was underscored that the sports sector contributes to the socio-economic development of ASEAN in many ways, including providing employment through the various commercial activities surrounding sports events and promoting healthy lifestyles. The sector also facilitates building of friendships and networks

among ASEAN athletes and sports professionals. ERIA President, Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura, notes, "One of the many ways to maximise impact of sports in economy and society is by leveraging the role of sports and recreation zone in ASEAN community building. Establishing sports zones promotes active health opportunities for people that can be converted into a profitable economic opportunity."

Traditional sports and games in ASEAN can be an ideal medium to reach out to local communities, especially in remote areas, where traditional practices still persist. ASEAN and its Member States can hold traditional sports and games in local communities to fulfil a dual role of revitalising these games and drawing tourism. Additionally, hosting events and establishing sports and recreation zones can enhance people's participation in sports and encourage healthy lifestyles.

The workshop programme included demonstrations of ancient Cambodian martial arts technique, *Kun Khmer* and *L'bokator*. Participants are optimistic that these traditional combat sports can be elevated to the same level as any other mixed martial arts (MMA) through the provision of training camp as sports zones. It was noted that the responsibility of preserving and promoting traditional sports and games does not lie solely with governments and their officials, but is a shared responsibility of all relevant stakeholders including the private sector and local communities.

Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Cambodia's Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports, underlined in his speech during the opening ceremony of the workshop, "ASEAN Member States need to take concrete actions to protect and promote traditional sports and games to build up our spirit as a community, bring peoples together, and instil a sense of pride in our society's cultural roots."

The workshop participants called for systematic and organised

actions to strengthen cooperation in preserving ASEAN traditional sports and games, increasing their visibility amidst digitalisation, promoting the establishment of green open spaces, and utilising existing sports facilities and sports event infrastructure legacies across ASEAN Member States.

In addition to the workshops, the Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship spearheaded the development of the **ASEAN Declaration on Fostering ASEAN Identity through the Safeguarding Traditional Sports and Games in the Modern World**. In support of the declaration, ERIA is conducting a research study on the preservation of traditional sports and games which will lay the groundwork for a more systemic and organised effort to preserve and promote traditional sports and games in ASEAN and its Member States.

These workshops and the declaration are aligned with the ASEAN Work Plan on Sports 2021-2025.

Going forward, there are various approaches to revitalise traditional sports and games, including the establishment of sports zones which can serve as venues to these activities; use of innovative digital technologies such as e-sports based on traditional sports and games; digital archiving of and access to traditional sports knowledge, practices, and events; and dissemination of information and events on various social media and online streaming platforms.

The adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Fostering ASEAN Identity through the Safeguarding traditional Sports and Games in the Modern World at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summit in November 2022 signals the high-level political commitment of ASEAN leaders towards traditional sports and games and provides opportunities for ASEAN and its Member States to develop a holistic strategy for preserving and carving a niche for ASEAN traditional sports and games at the international stage.

TRADITIONAL SPORTS AND GAMES

SEPAK TAKRAW

Introduced at the South East Peninsular Games (predecessor of the South East Asian Games) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1965

Variants of the sport are played across all ASEAN countries: Brunei Darussalam/Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore (*sepak raga*); Cambodia (*sey dok*); Indonesia (*rago tinggi, cepak, akraga*); the Lao PDR (*ka-taw*); Myanmar (*chinlone*); Philippines (*sipa*); Thailand (*takraw*); Viet Nam (*cau may*).

Sepak takraw is played by two teams of three players on opposing sides of the net. The goal is to toss the ball into the other side of the net using one's feet, knee, head, or chest. A team scores a point when the other team fails to return the ball over the net, tosses the ball out of bounds, or touches the ball by hand or arm.



MUAY

Introduced at the 2005 SEA Games in Manila, the Philippines

Variants of the sport are practiced in the Lao PDR (*muay Lao*); Cambodia (*pradal serey*); Myanmar (*lethwei*); Malaysia (*tomoi*); and Thailand (*muaythai*).

Muay is a full-contact sport with two fighters using their fists, elbows, knees, and legs to knock their opponent out, or strike and immobilise their opponent to gain points.



PENCAK SILAT

Introduced at the 1987 SEA Games in Jakarta, Indonesia

Pencak silat refers to a group of fighting styles developed and practiced in Indonesia. While each region has its own variation of this martial art, it typically uses the entire body—combining strikes, kicks, grappling, and throwing—and at times even weaponry to knock down one's opponent. In sporting events, one category involves a close combat match between two fighters, while three other categories involve competitors performing choreographed solo or group fighting routines, armed and unarmed.

In 2019, UNESCO recognised the mental-spiritual, self-defence, and artistic aspects of pencak silat and inscribed it in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



VOVINAM

Introduced at the 2011 SEA Games in Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Vovinam is a Vietnamese martial art developed in 1938 that emphasises physical strength and endurance, rational mind and good character, and a wide range of attacking and defensive techniques. Weapons such as swords, knives, and fans are sometimes used. In sports competitions, practitioners compete either in the technical skills or close combat category.



ARNIS

Introduced as a demonstration sport at the 1991 SEA Games in Manila, the Philippines, and as an official sport at the 2005 and 2019 SEA Games, also in Manila

Arnis, also commonly called *kali* or *eskrima*, is a combat sport that originated in the Philippines. It traditionally uses weapons, such as sticks, knives, and other improvised materials, as well as open-handed strikes, to disarm and defeat an opponent. In sporting events, competitors use padded sticks as weapons and are required to wear protective gear, i.e. headgear, body armour, hand gloves, and leg guard. In the combat category, competitors gain points by inflicting strikes or disarming their opponent (similar to fencing); in the performance category, competitors are judged based on the gracefulness and strength of movement.



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The ASEAN

People playing chess on a street in India

Some experts believe that the sixth-century Indian game *Caturanga*, which means “four troops of an army,” was the precursor to contemporary chess.

India has become a chess powerhouse, with seven of its players in the world’s top 100. In January 2023, 16-year-old M Pranesh became the country’s 79th Grandmaster.

More than a million compete in regional tournaments across India, where there are currently about fifty thousand officially registered chess players.

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