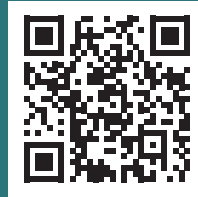


WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE ASEAN REGION

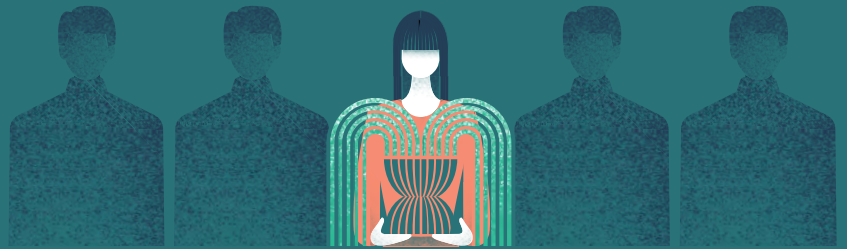
Data Snapshot

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Women's leadership in the ASEAN region

Data Snapshot



BOOSTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IS KEY TO INCLUSIVENESS IN ASEAN

Enabling women to take up leadership roles is an important first step towards a more inclusive region. Women in the ASEAN region account for a large portion of micro and small business owners and operators. As such, they are helping shape the region's economy and its social, economic and environmental impacts. Senior manager roles in large firms, however, are still mostly in the hands of men. Promoting their access to leadership roles is important across sectors.

MOST MANAGERS ARE STILL MEN

In 2022, women made up just 41 per cent of managers in the ASEAN region, up only 2 percentage points from 2000. This falls further to 26 per cent for higher paid jobs such as middle and senior management. There is also inequality across sectors, with women more likely to be in management in commerce and hospitality, for example, while making up less than one third of decision-making positions in specialized services such as construction, logistics and ICT. Having more women in management roles gives those women not only access to higher wages, but also greater agency to shape decisions that have important economic, environmental and social impacts for the ASEAN region as a whole.

WOMEN HAVE BEEN AT THE FRONTLINE AGAINST THE PANDEMIC, BUT ARE SIDELINED IN HEALTHCARE DECISION-MAKING

Women have played an essential role during the COVID-19 pandemic as health workers and front-line responders providing both paid and unpaid services, including a disproportionate share of caring for family members. Across ASEAN, an average of 67 per cent of healthcare workers are women. And yet, only one country (Viet Nam) has a female health minister, and just 11 per cent of chief executives in the region's biggest hospitals are women.

With such limited representation in health-related decision-making, women in ASEAN countries are unable to shape health policy and tailor services to women's needs, including for COVID-19 response and recovery.

WOMEN ARE NOT LEADING PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES, WHICH OFTEN INFORM POLICY TRENDS

Parliamentary committees allow a greater level of debate and exchange outside the mechanisms of legislation, and are therefore often where progressive ideas and policy shifts take root. However, women's leadership of these committees has been largely relegated to those dealing with gender equality, as seven of the nine such committees in ASEAN member states are chaired by women. Of the 10 committees dealing with foreign affairs, just four are chaired by women, while only one of the finance committees has a woman leader, and none of the defence or human rights committees have women members.

WOMEN'S POTENTIAL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP IS SIGNIFICANTLY UNDERUSED

Across ASEAN, just 6 per cent of environment and related ministries are led by women (compared to 15 per cent worldwide). This is an unused opportunity to promote women's contribution to policies that can boost conservation and fight environmental degradation. In the home and the wider community, women often lead sustainable resource management practices. In indigenous communities, they are often the holders of traditional ecological knowledge. Women's voices could help create more sustainable policies and practices, if they were not so excluded from decision-making in both the public and the private sectors.

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