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# ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program



*Thai volunteers in an interview sharing their experience from the AYVP inaugural program.*

*Photo credit: Richard Nyberg, USAID*

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Youth Volunteer Program (AYVP) is an ASEAN-initiated program supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of State. It promotes regional integration by enabling youth to participate in volunteer opportunities that build awareness about regional challenges.

Approximately 60 percent of the ASEAN population is under the age of 35. ASEAN has prioritized youth engagement under its Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint to encourage youth involvement and leadership in ways that contribute to personal development and benefit the ASEAN Community.

## **BUILDING SKILLS TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY**

The ASEAN Youth Ministers endorsed AYVP in 2013. The program mobilizes youth leaders to develop innovative solutions to social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges facing communities across Southeast Asia. ASEAN has also endorsed the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on Youth Volunteerism and Entrepreneurship, which promotes volunteering as a way to inspire solidarity, create a sense of belonging and increase understanding of the richness of ASEAN's history, languages, culture and common values. The program improves work skills, creates a sense of ASEAN identity and connectivity and facilitates community engagement on regional issues.

In addition to completing projects during their volunteer program, volunteers work to develop and implement plans for community projects to be carried out on return to their home countries.

## **SUPPORTING ASEAN YOUTH ECO-LEADERS**

In 2013, USAID supported the first year of the program in which 97 ASEAN Youth Eco-Leaders participated in environment projects in Malaysia. Between 2015 and 2017, USAID will continue to support AYVP programs including the Development of ASEAN Youth Eco-Leaders through Volunteerism and Community Engagement in Cambodia (2015); the Development of ASEAN Youth Disaster Response, Risk Reduction and Recovery Leaders through Volunteerism and Community Engagement in the Philippines (2016); and the Development of ASEAN Youth Disaster Response, Risk Reduction and Recovery Leaders through Volunteerism and Community Engagement in Indonesia (2017).

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia hosts and manages the program in collaboration with the Malaysian Ministry of Youth and Sports, which also provides financial support. The program works with various local partners to implement each of the in-country projects.

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