

# JENESYS<sup>2018</sup>

ASEAN Inbound Program 23rd Batch

## Japan-ASEAN Students Conference

Country: AMS + Timor Leste

Date: 25 February 2019

Participants: Youths from

ASEAN Member States/Timor-Leste/Japan

## Declaration of Action

**Theme; What the youths in Asian countries can do for achieving Sustainable Development Goals**

**Group A: Agriculture**

**Group B: Energy**

**Group C: Community Designing**

**Group D: Health**

**Group E: Gender**

**Group F: Aging Society**





## **Introduction**

We, the youths in ASIA involved in the JENESYS 2018 Student Conference tackled the sustainable development problem with promoting mutual understanding, building a basis for future friendship and cooperation, and becoming the leaders in the next generations by ourselves. The six problems based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are treated, such as Agriculture, Energy, Community Designing, Health, Gender, and Ageing Society. We deepened our understanding of the themes, found problems and root causes, and thought of action plans as a solution respectively through the program designed by JICE and MIS.

Group A shares the situation of agriculture, especially about the Aging and Decreasing Population in agriculture, and also what is required to achieve sustainable agriculture in future society and with young generation. Of many problems caused by aging and decreasing, youth's lack of interest was identified really important to improve. The committee propose solutions for better presence of agriculture by making it attractive.

Group B has learned about energy problems, particularly about rural electrification. Through pre-conferences and the inspection in Higashimatsushima and Ishinomaki, we have deepened understanding of it. Hence, this group planned projects to solve the problems with business methods called KJ method and a cause-and-effect relationship chart. Then we propose them as solutions.

Group C is cognizant that in order to achieve a resilient community, the local community members, particularly the youth should rise and claim their spaces as actors to their own community designing initiatives through various disaster risk reduction mechanisms, with the rising level of vulnerability to natural disasters from among and within Asian countries.

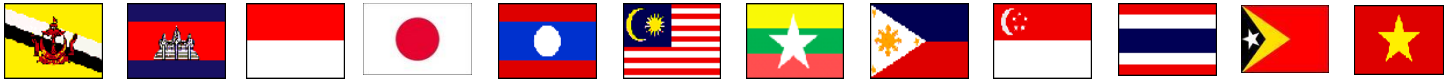
Group D encapsulates the idea of Health Inequalities among countries and the other facets that affect this problem. The committee created a plan of action that will make a sustainable action to deplete the increasing number of Health Inequality among Asian countries.

Group E acknowledges the importance of giving equal rights to women in society. Achieving Political Empowerment is one of the many identified areas that would allow women to gain a voice toward achieving Gender Equality.

Group F recognize that all countries in Asia and the Pacific are experiencing an unprecedented aging pace. With an increasing elderly population around the globe, it is crucial to creating an environment where the elderly can live actively and comfortably. Providing affordable quality welfare services which include healthcare, educational and employment opportunities would establish a sustainable living for the elderly in the society.

We, the youths are critical to and have a responsibility for addressing these issues. We are





born in an era of ASIA, intellectually proficient, technologically savvy, and have nuanced perspectives to tackle tough situations in a mutually beneficial manner. This empowers them with the ability to initiate the change required to address the six key problems. With our capacity to influence, youth have the responsibility to take the lead to achieve SDGs. These action plans have been crafted by keeping in mind that it can be taken back to our respective host countries and put into practice.





## Action plan of Group A: Agriculture

Aging and decreasing population in agriculture is a big trend not only in aged societies like Japan but also in Southeast Asian countries. The number of young farmers is decreasing and the proportion of agricultural employment in the world has dropped from 43 to 26 percent during the last three decades. Because of this demographic change in agriculture, food production is facing a lot of problems in terms of sustainability throughout the world.

Even though human labor in agriculture has decreased over the years, production has remained similar. However, we have noticed some problems that Japan and Southeast Asian countries' members are concerning, which is mainly focused on lack of interest and engagement in agriculture sector.

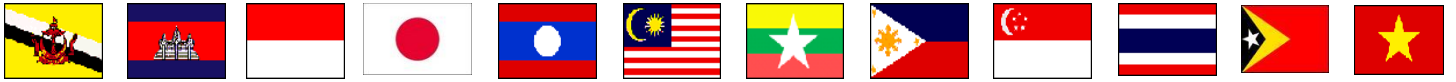
Lack of interest in agriculture can deteriorate the situation more negatively. If they don't know about the meaning of agriculture, the young generation cannot be interested in engaging in agriculture. But even if we know well about agriculture, we cannot be interested in it for your career, when it is not profitable and attractive as an industry. Agriculture is closely connected with distribution and retailing, so all stakeholders related to agriculture have to be profitable. Therefore, sustainability cannot be achieved by individual skills, knowledge, or assets. A holistic approach to make more profit and attract the young generation should be the target of today's agriculture. Lack of interest and engagement in agriculture sector caused by low income and lacking publicity.

- 1) The root cause of low income is low productivity and difficulty to expand business.

For solutions, first of all, a collaboration between farmers and various stakeholder need to be boosted. Second, the government or financial institution should provide loans and aid for a farmer to develop their farming business. Third, the ministry of agriculture and other related organizations need to provide the farmers with training, newer agriculture technology, and market information.

- 2) The root cause of lacking publicity and environment influence are lack of education in school, inappropriate mindset influenced by family and society, and a shortage of media publicity.

First solution is promoting higher benefit from agriculture to students through teaching strategy and extracurricular activities. Second solution is, take advantage of the power of media and success stories to change the mindset of young generation and society to achieve sustainable agriculture. There could be two steps: the first step to solve the problem of the lacking publicity is to make a good practice of agriculture management. If all the agriculture managements are poor and thus not attractive, publicity is of no impact, or worse, of negative impact. Therefore, it is necessary to realize successful agriculture management.



The second step is to break the bias that agriculture is not profitable. Solving the major social problem of agriculture has a great impact on the whole society. Last but not least, sharing knowledge of better agricultural management and its implementation through various social media platform should be encouraged.

In conclusion, Aging and decreasing population in agriculture is such a phenomena that require an urgent need of taking measure to prevent. Therefore, we aspire to call for intensive cooperation among Japan and Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, we firmly believe that young generation is the key factor to execute above-mentioned measures.



## Action plan of Group B: Energy

1) One of the key issues leading to the non-electrification in a rural area is the lack of resources in term of access to technology and expertise to support the energy projects. Global case competition will be held annually, with a different electrification case. Organization and school will hold the global case competition where it will serve as a communication bridge between problem provider and problem solver. The competition will have three participating categories; the students, corporations, and official agencies.

Organization and school will hold the annual global case competition to solve real-life challenges relating to rural electrification and to improving the livelihood. Organization and school will have to pre-plan and scope the problem statement with regards to the existing issues in the rural area. As a promotion, we use advertisements of traditional media and social media, and prestige and potential business opportunities from this case competition can help to attract talents to sign up.

2) Temburong, a district in Brunei, has a population of 10,543 people. It has vast natural resources because 94% of its land is still considered as rainforest. It is separated from the mainland by a river, so it is not connected to the main electricity grid. The whole population of Temburong has access to energy with the use of diesel generators which they get from the mainland. Energy is needed for Temburong to function, but with its chosen energy source, it is damaging not only its people and their environment but the whole earth as well. Diesel has high carbon emission which hurts our environment. Transportation cost is high since everyday, Temburong needs diesel delivered. Manpower is also needed to transport it.

As students, we are aware that our capabilities of actualizing a project is limited to create awareness and information dissemination. However, before we get down into details, we would like to present a case study with hopes that the government would try to consider it. The population of Temburong is not too many, hence we are confident that installing solar home panels would be easier in this region. Nowadays, solar energy is considered the cheapest form of renewable energy. While an initial cost is involved to kick-start the project, but looking at it in the long run, both the people and the environment would greatly benefit from it. In order to achieve the desired outcome, we have to perform the following items; 1. create a study about the pollution emitted in Temburong in using diesel. 2. create a study stating the benefits of installing solar panels. 3. look for companies which can help with the solar panel project in Temburong and 4. submit a proposal to the government for project activation.

We believe that as soon as the government sees the need and benefits of using solar panels, they would be motivated to initiate this project. We would also help in looking for





financial partners that could sustain this project. As part of this JENESYS program, we can look for partners in Japan which can invest and support this project. It will be implemented in the period of 5 years after all the approval and funding from relevant government agencies and private sectors. It would be a challenge to ask the people of Temburong to support this project, but that's where our strength is as students. We will be the awareness force that the government can utilize. Our group plans to make a noise in all social media accounts about the negative effects of using diesel as the source of energy. We will organize workshops and visit schools to make our group bigger and our reach wider. Our team will also go to Temburong and create awareness to the people living there. We believe that by telling and showing the people what happens to the earth when we use diesel, then the solar panel project would be successful. The people of Temburong would gladly embrace the change that will soon happen—which is the solar panel project.





## Action plan of Group C: Community Designing

We firmly believe that disaster prevention efforts should primarily start at the grassroots level and should be done in consonance with the lives of the people, therefore, making it relevant, contextual, sustainable and meaningful. We bank on the youth as the prime movers and asset of community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) in order to achieve positive impact to society's well-being.

CBDRR begins with mapping the previously experienced disasters in the community. This paves the way towards the identification of the disasters previously experienced by the community including its severity, recurrence and duration. It is also necessary to identify the vulnerable social groups in the community — persons with special needs, children, women and the elderly — to be able to scrutinize the reasons that makes them vulnerable so that necessary decision making points could be managed.

In order to proactively move forward, it is essential to establish the capacities/capabilities and resources that local communities could leverage on. This allow them to be conscious of their strengths and be able to maximize such. This can be in the form of **human capital** such as knowledgeable and skilled individuals; **economic capital** such as available materials and financial resources; and **social capital** such as NGOs/CSO and other servicing organizations that could work side-by-side in the disaster risk reduction efforts.

The entire community-based disaster prevention initiatives should be facilitated by the government (*as duty bearers*) and must be participated in by the community members (*as rights claimants*). Therefore, makes the entire CBDRR process people-centered, proactive and an inter-agency effort.

Having been aware of these realities, we would like to push for the following programs that could compliment CBDRR initiatives namely: mental health intervention program which is geared towards establishing emotional connection with survivors in non-intrusive & compassionate manner and encouraging them to take active role in their recovery; and other projects to disaster resiliency and awareness.

In summary, Group C is fully committed in CBDRR efforts by encouraging our fellow youth and local communities to implement the above-mentioned strategies which will aid in reducing existing disaster risks as well as those likely to emerge in the future. CBDRR is indeed a concrete expression of the Japanese culture of 'Kizuna' which means coming together as one community.







## Action plan of Group D: Health

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Health Inequality is defined as *differences in health status* or in the *distribution of health determinants* between different population groups. On a hierarchical level, people with better income and wealth have more advantages; people with lower income will have a limited source of supply thus not having to satisfy both psychological and physiological needs.

As declared by WHO, 17.9 million people die each year from CVD. One of the contributing factors is diet-related. As such, we want to reduce fast food intake to protect children from related health risks. The number of people affected in ASEAN countries is rapidly increasing. Due to expensive organic resources, most opt for the most convenient and cheaper option, which is, fast food.

Mental distress has become prevalent in the Asia Pacific. The percentage of mental distress patients are increasing quickly during these years in ASEAN, e.g 20% of Vietnam and Thailand have diagnosed mental distress cases. Moreover, mental distress has a significant impact, leading to illness, disability, and suicide, especially among children.

Firstly, to protect children from health risks due to fast food, we intend to conduct weekend group sessions for parents to learn and be encouraged to prepare simple healthy meals with their children. Using this platform to bring parents together, they can share their experiences while increasing parent-child interaction. Delivery services will be provided so that healthy food can be easily accessible to the public. To motivate parents to come on a weekend, we will use vouchers and coupons as incentives. They will be able to obtain these benefits once they have attended a number of sessions. We believe that the sessions will be enjoyable and effective in increasing healthy food intake by children.

Secondly, in order to eliminate distress that threatens children, we plan to organize a “Mental Health Festival”, an annual week-long event aimed to raise awareness of mental distress, challenge stigma and promote mental wellbeing. The first edition of the event will be organized by youth leaders from universities, in partnership with specialists or psychiatrists. The festival will be filled with many fun and meaningful activities to engage participants (eg. Race for mental health, movie screening and panel discussions, photo booths, free consultation with specialists, etc). With better awareness of this issue, we hope that we can build a more inclusive society that is more understanding of mental distress and its harms and can work towards eliminating it together.

In conclusion, the two proposed solutions aim to reduce inequalities in the above mentioned urgent health issues. We aspire to increase awareness on these health issues starting from the young.





## Action plan of Group E: Gender

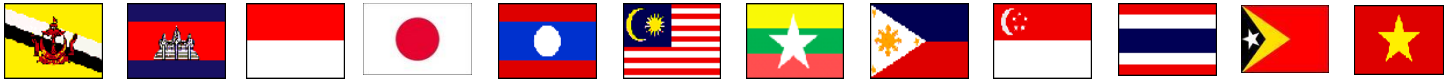
The definition of gender takes on many forms and it is different from the definition of 'sex', which is a biological identity determined at birth and is usually fixed in a lifetime. Gender is widely known for its power relations and the socio-cultural differences between women and men. It is relational, contextual, requires a specific place, time and is hierarchical in nature. Additionally, the 21st century acknowledges the non-binary and diversity of gender and sexualities such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT). Economic participation such as gender stereotypes, Education Attainments such as literacy rate, Political Empowerment such as the political representation of women and Health & Survival are also key components of Gender Equality. Each country is at a different stage of the Gender Equality Continuum: Gender Exploitation, followed by Gender Unawareness, Gender Sensitive, and Gender Transformative.

A key issue identified today is the strong gender stereotype in our society, such as men will go to work and women will stay at home. Additionally, women are still being discriminated in some areas and are forced to stay silent even after facing violence. These lead to a lack of confidence among women, which lowers their confidence and economic status. Hence, women often lack a voice in higher positions such as in the political scene. This prevents women from being involved in the decision-making process and as a result, their life status is often at a hiatus.

Hence, it is vital to keep in mind the Sustainable Development Goal number 5's key principle of "leaving no one behind", whereby from 2030, empowerment of women, girls, and the minority should be given equal rights in society. Achieving Political Empowerment is one of the many identified areas that would allow women to gain a voice toward achieving Gender Equality.

To achieve this, countries such as Thailand could utilize the growing influential power of mass media to abolish gender stereotype messages. To increase visibility, Thailand could also employ female role models and influencers to portray women as being independent, strong and capable individuals. Secondly, Thailand can cooperate with NGOs and influential figures such as professors and specialists, to create campaigns or events to raise awareness about gender equality. Thirdly, Counselling Sessions can be implemented to educate both sexes on how to manage their emotions and stress better to better equip them with the necessary skills to step into the political field.

Fourthly, gender discrimination can also be reduced via other channels such as military recruitment or job recruitments. In fact, 200,000 signatures have been garnered on online petitions for women to participate in the military. This could be accomplished by



adopting the “blind recruitment” strategy, where interview methods would not reveal the applicants’ gender.

While these action plans are put in place to minimize the gender gap in Thailand, there are also other issues that were addressed and can be used for future plans, such as sexual harassment at the workplace and maternity deaths.



## Action plan of Group F: Aging Society

We, the youth leaders of Group F - Ageing Society Committee, recognize that all countries in Asia and the Pacific are experiencing an unprecedented ageing pace. A call for action from the youth is organized to address the demographic transition towards an aging society. Given this situation, we recognize that the elderly should not be deprived by their right to have adequate food, appropriate housing, affordable healthcare, social security, to take part in cultural life, work and continue being productive citizens of the country.

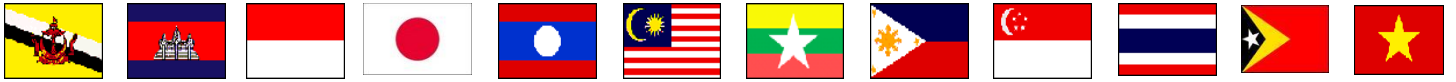
With an end in view of establishing intergenerational solidarity towards a society for all ages our declaration of action is focused on the following: 1) enablement of various sectors such as government, private, and other sectors to serve as social support; 2) campaign for better and more affordable health care services; and 3) aiding and sourcing of meaningful employment that fits the competencies of the elderly.

Allowing the youth that belongs to the present generational cohort to develop solutions to address some of the most critical issues pertaining to the aging society is a clear example of a bottom-up approach to nation-building. We believe that the youth has not yet reached the maximum potential when it comes to exercising civic work, and the more the youth know about the societal issues, the more collective efforts can be expected.

A threefold call for action for the Millennials which are the staunch supporter of the declaration of action is proposed. First, it has been identified that a number of elderly people in Asia and the Pacific are suffering from feeling loneliness, which makes them get old faster. Although some NGO and NPO are tacking on this issue, because of lack of manpower and fund, they are inactive. As a solution, we would like to utilize the network of NGO/NPO so that we can gain more fund and collaborate with university students who belong to social organizations so that the elderly can share their wisdom with the younger generation and get a sense of recognition. Second, conditions such as cancer, stroke, and dementia are predicted to cause health care costs in the area to increase sharply. Half ASEAN nations are in the top 20 most expensive countries for healthcare in Asia, approximately 15% of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental disorder. The main issue such as the healthcare issue in ASEAN is not only expensive but also not of high quality. In this issue focusing on two main ideas which encompass health; compiles with two characters mentally and physically, and another one is about employment; compounds such in point of education and activities. Provide affordable and quality healthcare services to the elderly, happy life scheme, integrated health services and so on. And lastly, elderly people need to be motivated to learn new competencies. In particular, elderly people in Asian countries are less exposed to technology.

As a solution, we propose to create community-based organizations for elderly people,





which aim to improve the living condition for them and develop their community. Through the implementation of these projects, we would like to reduce elderly's dependency on the other generation, motivate the younger generation, transfer knowledge of the elderly, and maintain the economic stability so that we can create a society where the elderly can participate actively and comfortably. The three-fold process of launching a call for action from the youth is coming from a premise that it is important to develop the proper attitude, and correct mindset towards social, economic, and cultural concerns at an early age.



## Conclusion

We will continue to endeavor to solve the six issues mentioned above. In order to realize a sustainable world, we understand that we have the need and responsibility to act. Hence, we resolve to address our six issues by engaging young people like ourselves and will continue to do so in perpetuity. Through our focus on these issues, we hope to reach our goal of Asian youth's role to achieve SDGs and sustain our world.

Group A works on enhancing the presence of agriculture by making farmers and the other related industries profitable and thus attractive career. In order to appeal to young generation, first step is inventing good practices in agriculture management making use of technology and increasing access points to agriculture.

Group B suggested Global case competition to solve non-electrification in rural areas. Also, they will implement long term project which will start with raising people's awareness through workshops and classes.

Group C is fully committed in CBDRR efforts by encouraging our fellow youth and local communities to be aware of the disaster prevention and make opportunities to strengthen the bonds among local people in our daily lives.

Group D is committed to promoting the facilitation of educational and entrepreneurial developments in order to breach the issue of economic imbalance.

Group E aims to reduce the gender gap in Thailand by empowering women through various channels. This includes reducing gender stereotypes through mass media by hiring female influencers, partnering with NGOs to spread gender equality literacy, implementing counseling sessions to equip women with good emotional skills needed for the political field, and reducing biased work and military hiring methods by adopting 'blind interviews' strategies.

Group F envisions a society where the elderly are valued and treasured. We are committed to providing high-quality welfare services to enhance the lives of the aging population.

We would like to conclude by adding that we would bring our ideas into actualization by making them easy to implement while remaining impactful. We believe that our ideas in their simplicity can include individuals across religions, races and social strata.

