

# What Does ASEAN Mean to ASEAN Peoples? Survey Findings from Cambodia\*

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## Introduction

With technical and financial support from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace conducted a survey and an in-depth focus group discussion (FGD) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to assess people's perceptions of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), especially the awareness, aspirations, expectations, concerns, and hopes of selected groups in the country towards ASEAN. This study is a contribution towards the ASEAN@50: Retrospective and Perspectives on the Making, Substance, Significance, and Future of ASEAN project.

The survey was conducted through prepared sets of questionnaires, which were sent to selected groups of respondents as required by the scope of the study. Seven groups of people participated in the survey: (1) labour, (2) members of civil society organisations, (3) business professionals and/or entrepreneurs, (4) academe, (5) students, (6) government officials, and (7) others. The text of the questionnaires was prepared by ERIA in English then translated by researchers from the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace into the local language, Khmer. A total of 310 sets of questionnaires, each containing 19 questions, were distributed directly to the respondents, but only 203 were collected and qualified for data entry and analysis.

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\* All figures and tables in this chapter were derived from the survey data.

In addition, an FGD was held with 22 stakeholders, comprising 5 university students, 3 respondents from non-governmental organisations and academia, 10 business professionals, and 4 government officials. In the FGD, stakeholders were asked to elaborate on their answers to some of the key questions asked in the survey. Participants in the FGD were also given the chance to complete the survey questionnaires manually, and this was carried out prior to conducting the meeting.

## Findings from the Survey

### Survey representation: Distribution by age, gender, and affiliation

Of the 203 respondents, 86 were aged 16–30 years old (young people), representing 42.4% of the total; 89 (43.8%) were 31–49 years old (middle-aged people); and 28 (13.8%) were senior individuals aged 50 or over (Table 1).

Seventy-two (35.5%) respondents were female, and 131 (64.5%) were male (Table 2).

**Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents by Age**

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
16–30 years	86	42.4
31–49 years	89	43.8
50+ years	28	13.8
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

**Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents by Gender**

Gender	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Female	72	35.5
Male	131	64.5
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

The respondents were from seven groups of occupations (Table 3). They comprised 49 students (24.1% of the total respondents), 27 labour or workers, 36 business people, 24 from non-governmental organisations or civil society organisations, 19 from academia, 29 government officials, and 19 ‘others’ including farmers, military officers, and homemakers.

**Table 3. Distribution of the Respondents by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Students	49	24.1
Labour	27	13.3
Business	36	17.7
Civil Society	24	11.8
Academia	19	9.4
Government	29	14.3
Other	19	9.4
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

## Awareness of ASEAN

When asked about their level of awareness of ASEAN, 48 respondents selected ‘very familiar’, 55 selected ‘moderately familiar’, 67 chose ‘somewhat familiar’, 22 selected ‘slightly familiar’, and only 11 selected ‘not at all familiar’ (Table 4). This implies that the majority of Cambodians are well aware of ASEAN.

**Table 4. Awareness of ASEAN**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Very familiar	48	23.7
Moderately familiar	55	27.1
Somewhat familiar	67	33.0
Slightly familiar	22	10.8
Not at all familiar	11	5.4
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

When disaggregating the responses by age group, 14 of the 86 respondents aged 16–30 (16.3%) said they were ‘very familiar’ with ASEAN, 26 of the 89 middle-aged respondents (29.2% of those aged 31–49) selected ‘very familiar’, and 8 of the 28 respondents aged 50 or older (28.6%) said they were ‘very familiar’ with ASEAN (Table 5). This indicates that older people have a greater awareness of ASEAN.

**Table 5. Awareness of ASEAN by Age Group**

Age Group	Awareness of ASEAN (number of respondents)						Very familiar (%)
	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Total	
16–30 years	14	23	33	12	4	86	16.3
31–49 years	26	24	29	6	4	89	29.2
50+ years	8	8	5	4	3	28	28.6
<i>Total</i>	48	55	67	22	11	203	23.7

The female respondents were found to have a greater awareness of ASEAN than the male respondents. Twenty of the 72 female respondents (27.8%) indicated they were ‘very familiar’ with ASEAN, while 28 of the 131 male respondents (21.4%) selected the same answer (Table 6).

**Table 6. Awareness of ASEAN by Gender**

Gender	Awareness of ASEAN (number of respondents)						Very familiar (%)
	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Total	
Female	20	21	22	8	1	72	27.8
Male	28	34	45	14	10	131	21.4
<i>Total</i>	48	55	67	22	11	203	23.7

Among the different affiliations, government officials had the greatest awareness of ASEAN as 26 of 29 (89.7%) indicated they were ‘very familiar’ with ASEAN (Table 7). The second-highest was the business group, in which 7 of 36 respondents selected the same choice. None of the respondents from the labour or ‘other’ groups selected ‘very familiar’.

**Table 7. Awareness of ASEAN by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Awareness of ASEAN (number of respondents)						Very familiar (%)
	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Total	
Students	8	17	18	3	3	49	16.3
Labour	0	13	7	4	3	27	0.0
Business	7	7	16	5	1	36	19.4
Civil society	3	5	10	5	1	24	12.5
Academia	4	8	6	1	0	19	21.1
Government	26	3	0	0	0	29	89.7
Other	0	2	10	4	3	19	0.0
<i>Total</i>	48	55	67	22	11	203	23.7

## Feeling of being an ASEAN citizen

When asked whether they felt like ASEAN citizens, respondents in all age, gender, and affiliations groups generally gave positive answers. The survey respondents were given four options: ‘very much’, ‘moderately’, ‘somewhat’, and ‘no’. Of the 203 respondents, 64 (31.5%) selected ‘very much’, 83 (40.9%) selected ‘moderately’, and 50 (24.6%) selected ‘somewhat’. Only six respondents selected ‘no’ (Table 8).

**Table 8. Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Very much	64	31.5
Moderately	83	40.9
Somewhat	50	24.6
No	6	3.0
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

Examining the responses by age, 22 of the 86 respondents (25.6%) in the youngest age group selected ‘very much’, while 31 of the 89 respondents (34.8%) in the middle-aged group and 11 of 28 (39.3%) in the oldest age group selected the same option (Table 9). This implies that older people feel more positively towards being ASEAN citizens.

**Table 9. Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen by Age Group**

Age Group	Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen (number of respondents)					Very much (%)
	Very much	Moderately	Somewhat	No	Total	
16-30 years	22	37	25	2	86	25.6
31-49 years	31	40	18	0	89	34.8
50+ years	11	6	7	4	28	39.3
Total	64	83	50	6	203	31.5

The male respondents felt more strongly about being ASEAN citizens than the female respondents. Twenty of the 72 (27.8%) female respondents selected 'very much', while 44 (33.6%) of the 131 male respondents selected the same choice (Table 10).

**Table 10. Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen by Gender**

Gender	Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen (number of respondents)					Very much (%)
	Very much	Moderately	Somewhat	No	Total	
Female	20	34	17	1	72	27.8
Male	44	49	33	5	131	33.6
Total	64	83	50	6	203	31.5

Examining the respondents' feelings of being ASEAN citizens by affiliation, surprisingly high shares of students and those in the labour group selected 'very much'. In the survey, 14 of 27 (51.9%) in the labour group selected 'very much', while 20 of 49 (40.8%) in the student group selected the same option (Table 11). However, when combining the answers of both 'very much' and 'moderately', the government officials felt more positively about being ASEAN citizens.

**Table 11. Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen (number of respondents)					Very much or moderately (%)
	Very much	Moderately	Somewhat	No	Total	
Students	20	18	9	2	49	77.6
Labour	14	6	6	1	27	74.1
Business	4	18	13	1	36	61.1
Civil society	7	8	8	1	24	62.5
Academia	6	9	4	0	19	79.0
Government	10	14	4	1	29	82.8
Other	3	10	6	0	19	68.4
<i>Total</i>	64	83	50	6	203	72.4

## Aspirations, concerns, and hopes for ASEAN

The survey asked respondents to answer simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question of whether they had aspirations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN. The feedback was generally positive. Of the 203 respondents, 162 (79.8%) selected ‘yes’ and only 41 (20.2%) selected ‘no’ (Table 12).

**Table 12. Having Aspirations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
No	41	20.2
Yes	162	79.8
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

The questionnaires allowed respondents to add comments about their aspirations, concerns, or hopes. As expected, not all respondents wrote comments. Only about one-third of all respondents, most of which were government officials or from academia, gave details:

### Aspirations

- We are proud to be ASEAN citizens.
- ASEAN provides strong market access to Cambodian products and services.
- ASEAN safeguards peace and security with its bigger and more powerful neighbours for Cambodia.
- We are ASEAN; we must live together and prosper together.
- Cambodian skilled labourers will have increasing opportunities to work legally in ASEAN member countries, especially in Thailand, and will be treated with respect for their rights.

### Concerns

- Cambodia will lose competitiveness with ASEAN in the markets for labour and quality products.
- Development gaps will grow as some ASEAN members become richer, and Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam will be exploited.
- Negative impacts from different cultures will harm Cambodia's tradition and culture.
- There will be negative impacts on the environment, especially in Phnom Penh and other megacities in ASEAN.

### Hopes

- ASEAN Member States will work together closely and with mutual respect.
- ASEAN will represent its ideas and position as 'one voice' in international politics and security issues.
- ASEAN will bring a better future, with development and prosperity.
- ASEAN Members States can resolve their differences and share a common destiny.

The oldest age group had the highest share of those responding positively to having aspirations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN, with 27 of 28 respondents (96.4%) answering 'yes' (Table 13). Only 82.0% of respondents in the middle-aged group and 72.1% in the youngest group answered 'yes'.

**Table 13. Having Aspirations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN by Age Group**

Age Group	Aspirations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN (number of respondents)			Yes (%)
	No	Yes	Total	
16–30 years	24	62	86	72.1
31–49 years	16	73	89	82.0
50+ years	1	27	28	96.4
Total	41	162	203	79.8



By gender, a greater share of the male respondents answered positively than the female respondents. Of the 131 male respondents, 106 (80.9%) selected ‘yes’, while 56 of the 72 female respondents (77.8%) selected the same option (Table 14).

**Table 14. Having Aspirations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN by Gender**

Gender	Aspirations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN (number of respondents)			Yes (%)
	No	Yes	Total	
Female	16	56	72	77.8
Male	25	106	131	80.9
Total	41	162	203	79.8

Further examination of the responses by affiliation reveals that 28 of the 49 students (77.6%), 23 of the 27 labour respondents (85.2%), 29 of the 39 business respondents (80.6%), 17 of the 24 civil society respondents (70.8%), 23 of the 29 government officials (84.2%), and 16 of the 19 respondents in the ‘other’ category (84.2%) selected ‘yes’ (Table 15). The results indicate a high incidence of having aspirations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN among all groups of people in Cambodia.

**Table 15. Having Aspirations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Aspirations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN (number of respondents)			Yes (%)
	No	Yes	Total	
Students	11	38	49	77.6
Labour	4	23	27	85.2
Business	7	29	36	80.6
Civil society	7	17	24	70.8
Academia	3	16	19	84.2
Government	6	23	29	79.3
Other	3	16	19	84.2
Total	41	162	203	79.8

## Perception of membership of ASEAN

The survey next asked respondents how they felt about Cambodia's membership of ASEAN. The four available answers were 'a good thing', 'a bad thing', 'neither good nor bad', and 'don't know'. Of the 203 respondents, 148 (72.9%) answered 'good' for this question. Only 7 respondents (3.5%) chose 'bad', 39 (19.2%) selected 'neither good nor bad', and 9 selected 'don't know' (Table 16).

**Table 16. Perception of Membership of ASEAN**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
A good thing	148	72.9
A bad thing	7	3.5
Neither good nor bad	39	19.2
Don't know	9	4.4
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

The oldest age group had the highest share (75.0%) of respondents who answered positively about membership of ASEAN by choosing 'good' (Table 17).

**Table 17. Perception of Membership of ASEAN by Age Group**

Age Group	Membership of ASEAN (number of respondents)					Good (%)
	Good	Bad	Neither	Don't Know	Total	
16–30 years	61	3	17	5	86	70.9
31–49 years	66	1	19	3	89	74.2
50+ years	21	3	3	1	28	75.0
<i>Total</i>	148	7	39	9	203	72.9

A greater share of the male respondents (77.9%) than the female respondents (63.9%) indicated they had a 'good' perception of membership of ASEAN (Table 18).

**Table 18. Perception of Membership of ASEAN by Gender**

Gender	Membership of ASEAN (number of respondents)					Good (%)
	Good	Bad	Neither	Don't Know	Total	
Female	46	2	21	3	72	63.9
Male	102	5	18	6	131	77.9
Total	148	7	39	9	203	72.9

By affiliation, the labour and academia groups had the highest shares of positive answers, with 88.9% and 84.1% answering 'good', respectively (Table 19).

**Table 19. Perception of Membership of ASEAN by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Membership of ASEAN (number of respondents)					Good (%)
	Good	Bad	Neither	Don't Know	Total	
Students	34	1	9	5	49	69.4
Labour	24	0	2	1	27	88.9
Business	22	3	10	1	36	61.1
Civil society	17	2	5	0	24	70.8
Academia	16	1	2	0	19	84.2
Government	22	0	6	1	29	75.9
Other	13	0	5	1	19	68.4
Total	148	7	39	9	203	72.9

## Benefit from being a member of ASEAN

The survey asked respondents whether Cambodia had benefited from being a member of ASEAN. The five available answers were 'very much', 'moderately', 'somewhat', 'no', and 'don't know'. Of the 203 respondents, 54 (26.6%) answered 'very much', 63 (31.0%) selected 'moderately', 8 selected 'no', and 6 selected 'don't know' (Table 20).

**Table 20. Benefit of ASEAN Membership**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Very much	54	26.6
Moderately	63	31.0
Somewhat	72	35.5
No	8	3.9
Don't know	6	3.0
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

Among the respondents, those in the youngest and the middle-aged groups gave the highest shares of very positive answers regarding Cambodia's benefit from being a member of ASEAN, at 27.9% and 27.0%, respectively (Table 21).

**Table 21. Benefit of ASEAN Membership by Age Group**

Age Group	Benefit from ASEAN (number of respondents)						Very much (%)
	Very much	Moderate	Somewhat	No	Don't Know	Total	
16–30 years	24	23	30	6	3	86	27.9
31–49 years	24	27	35	1	2	89	27.0
50+ years	6	13	7	1	1	28	21.4
<i>Total</i>	54	63	72	8	6	203	26.6

By gender, a higher share of male respondents (29.8%) than female respondents (20.8%) answered very positively about the benefit from ASEAN membership (Table 22).

**Table 22. Benefit of ASEAN Membership by Gender**

Gender	Benefit from ASEAN (number of respondents)						Very much (%)
	Very much	Moderate	Somewhat	No	Don't Know	Total	
Female	15	25	25	4	3	72	20.8
Male	39	38	47	4	3	131	29.8
<i>Total</i>	54	63	72	8	6	203	26.6

Of the respondents, high shares of the business group (36.1%) and students (34.7%) indicated that Cambodia had benefited very much from being a member of ASEAN (Table 23).

**Table 23. Benefit of ASEAN Membership by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Benefit from ASEAN (number of respondents)						Very much (%)
	Very much	Moderate	Somewhat	No	Don't Know	Total	
Students	17	17	12	2	1	49	34.7
Labour	2	15	9	1	0	27	7.4
Business	13	6	15	2	0	36	36.1
Civil society	5	4	13	0	2	24	20.8
Academia	4	7	7	1	0	19	21.1
Government	9	11	7	1	1	29	31.0
Other	4	3	9	1	2	19	21.1
<i>Total</i>	54	63	72	8	6	203	26.6

## Feeling if Cambodia were to leave ASEAN

Respondents were also asked how they would feel if Cambodia were to leave ASEAN. The five options were 'extremely concerned', 'moderately concerned', 'somewhat concerned', 'slightly concerned', and 'not at all concerned'. Of the respondents, 87 (42.9%), selected 'extremely concerned', 59 (29.1%), selected 'moderately concerned', 40 (19.7%) indicated 'somewhat concerned', 10 (4.9%) selected slightly concerned, and 7 selected 'not at all concerned' (Table 24).

**Table 24. Feeling if Cambodia Were to Leave ASEAN**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Extremely concerned	87	42.9
Moderately concerned	59	29.1
Somewhat concerned	40	19.7
Slightly concerned	10	4.9
Not at all concerned	7	3.5
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

All age groups expressed similar concerns about Cambodia leaving ASEAN. Among the respondents, 43.0% of the youngest age group, 43.8% of the middle-aged group, and 39.3% of the oldest group indicated they would be ‘extremely concerned’ if Cambodia were to leave ASEAN (Table 25).

**Table 25. Feeling if Cambodia Were to Leave ASEAN by Age**

Age Group	Feeling if Cambodia Were to Leave ASEAN (number of respondents)						Extremely concerned (%)
	Extremely concerned	Moderately concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Not at all concerned	Total	
16–30 years	37	27	17	5	0	86	43.0
31–49 years	39	20	20	3	7	89	43.8
50+ years	11	12	3	2	0	28	39.3
<i>Total</i>	87	59	40	10	7	203	42.9

Examining the responses by gender indicates only a slight difference between the genders. Of the 72 female respondents, 30 (41.7%) chose ‘extremely concerned’, while 57 of the 131 male respondents (43.5%) chose the same option (Table 26).

**Table 26. Feeling if Cambodia Were to Leave ASEAN by Gender**

Gender	Feeling if Cambodia Were to Leave ASEAN (number of respondents)						Extremely concerned (%)
	Extremely concerned	Moderately concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Not at all concerned	Total	
Female	30	22	16	1	3	72	41.7
Male	57	37	24	9	4	131	43.5
<i>Total</i>	87	59	40	10	7	203	42.9

By affiliation, the ‘other’ group had the highest share of respondents who chose ‘extremely concerned’, at 57.9%. This was followed by the government officials at 37.9% (Table 27).

**Table 27. Feeling if Cambodia Were to Leave ASEAN by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Feeling if Cambodia Were to Leave ASEAN (number of respondents)						Extremely concerned (%)
	Extremely concerned	Moderately concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Not at all concerned	Total	
Students	21	14	13	1	0	49	42.9
Labour	9	14	1	2	1	27	33.3
Business	17	8	8	1	2	36	47.2
Civil society	10	4	5	3	2	24	41.7
Academia	8	6	4	1	0	19	42.1
Government	11	11	5	0	2	29	37.9
Other	11	2	4	2	0	19	57.9
<i>Total</i>	87	59	40	10	7	203	42.9

## Optimism for the future of ASEAN

Respondents were next asked whether they were optimistic about the future of ASEAN. The five options were ‘extremely optimistic’, ‘moderately optimistic’, ‘somewhat optimistic’, ‘slightly optimistic’, and ‘not at all optimistic’. Of the respondents, 49 (24.1%) selected ‘extremely optimistic’, 92 (45.3%) chose ‘moderately optimistic’, 41 (20.2%) selected ‘somewhat optimistic’, 17 (8.4%) selected ‘slightly optimistic’, and only 4 (2.0%) chose ‘not at all optimistic’ (Table 28).

**Table 28. Optimism for the Future of ASEAN**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Extremely optimistic	49	24.1
Modertaley optimistic	92	45.3
Somewhat optimistic	41	20.2
Slightly optimistic	17	8.4
Not at all optimistic	4	2.0
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

By age group, the young and middle-aged respondents (26.7% and 25.8%, respectively) shared nearly similar rates of optimism for ASEAN. However, the oldest group was less optimistic (10.7%) (Table 29).

**Table 29. Optimism for the Future of ASEAN by Age**

Age Group	Optimism for ASEAN (number of respondents)						Extremely optimistic (%)
	Extremely optimistic	Moderately optimistic	Somewhat optimistic	Slightly optimistic	Not at all optimistic	Total	
16–30 years	23	35	20	7	1	86	26.7
31–49 years	23	38	18	9	1	89	25.8
50+ years	3	19	3	1	2	28	10.7
<i>Total</i>	49	92	41	17	4	203	24.1

Examining the responses by gender shows that a greater share of the male respondents (25.2%) chose ‘extremely optimistic’ compared to the female respondents (22.2%) (Table 30).

**Table 30. Optimism for the Future of ASEAN by Gender**

Gender	Optimism for ASEAN (number of respondents)						Extremely optimistic (%)
	Extremely optimistic	Moderately optimistic	Somewhat optimistic	Slightly optimistic	Not at all optimistic	Total	
Female	16	35	16	5	0	72	22.2
Male	33	57	25	12	4	131	25.2
<i>Total</i>	49	92	41	17	4	203	24.1

Looking at the shares of respondents who chose ‘extremely optimistic’ by affiliation group shows that the respondents in the business group (38.9%) were the most optimistic about ASEAN. This was followed by the ‘other’ group (36.8%) and the government officials (31.0%) (Table 31).



**Table 31. Optimism for the Future of ASEAN by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Optimism for ASEAN (number of respondents)						Extremely optimistic (%)
	Extremely optimistic	Moderately optimistic	Somewhat optimistic	Slightly optimistic	Not at all optimistic	Total	
Students	9	30	7	2	1	49	18.4
Labour	2	17	5	3	0	27	7.4
Business	14	9	10	3	0	36	38.9
Civil society	4	12	3	2	3	24	16.7
Academia	4	6	5	4	0	19	21.1
Government	9	14	5	1	0	29	31.0
Other	7	4	6	2	0	19	36.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>24.1</b>

## Perception of media coverage of ASEAN

The survey asked the respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: ‘The media (newspapers, radio, television, and online news) does not have enough coverage of ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges.’ The respondents could choose from five answers: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. The results show that 46 of the total 203 respondents (22.7%) selected ‘strongly agree’, 89 respondents (43.8%) chose ‘agree’, 29 (14.3%) selected ‘neutral’, 30 selected ‘disagree’, and 9 selected ‘strongly disagree’ (Table 32).

The share of those who strongly agreed with the statement was highest for the oldest age group, at 25.0% or 7 of 28 respondents (Table 33).

**Table 32. Perception of Media Coverage of ASEAN**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Strongly agree	46	22.7
Agree	89	43.8
Neutral	29	14.3
Disagree	30	14.8
Strongly disagree	9	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 33. Perception of Media Coverage of ASEAN by Age Group**

Age Group	The Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN (number of respondents)					Total	Strongly Agree (%)
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree		
16–30 years	17	37	12	17	3	86	19.8
31–49 years	22	39	12	11	5	89	24.7
50+ years	7	13	5	2	1	28	25.0
<i>Total</i>	46	89	29	30	9	203	22.7

The responses by gender show that the male respondents (32 of 131, or 24.4%) had a higher share than female respondents (14 of 72, or 19.4%) of those who strongly agreed with the statement that the media does not have enough coverage of ASEAN (Table 34).

**Table 34. Perception of Media Coverage of ASEAN by Gender**

Gender	The Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN (number of respondents)					Total	Strongly Agree (%)
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree		
Female	14	34	10	10	4	72	19.4
Male	32	55	19	20	5	131	24.4
<i>Total</i>	46	89	29	30	9	203	22.7

By affiliation, the business group (12 of 36, or 33.3%) and those from academia (6 of 19, or 31.6%) had the highest shares of those who strongly agreed with the statement (Table 35).

**Table 35. Perception of Media Coverage of ASEAN by Affiliation**

Affiliation	The Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN (number of respondents)						Strongly Agree (%)
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	
Students	7	25	6	10	1	49	14.3
Labour	5	6	10	6	0	27	18.5
Business	12	12	6	4	2	36	33.3
Civil society	4	14	3	0	3	24	16.7
Academia	6	9	1	3	0	19	31.6
Government	9	14	1	5	0	29	31.0
Other	3	9	2	2	3	19	15.8
<i>Total</i>	46	89	29	30	9	203	22.7

## Perception of the use of ASEAN school textbooks

The survey asked the respondents the following question: ‘Would you agree or disagree with using school textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges?’ The five available answers were ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. The results show that 88 respondents (43.4%) selected ‘strongly agree’, and 94 (46.3%) chose ‘agree’, 15 selected ‘neutral’, 3 selected ‘disagree’, and 3 selected ‘strongly disagree’ (Table 36).

**Table 36. Perception of the Use of ASEAN School Textbooks**

	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Strongly agree	88	43.4
Agree	94	46.3
Neutral	15	7.4
Disagree	3	1.5
Strongly disagree	3	1.5
<i>Total</i>	203	100.0

The responses on the perception of the use of ASEAN school textbooks by age group show that all age groups shared similarly high levels of agreement with the statement (Table 37). The shares of those who chose ‘strongly agree’ were 37.2% for the youth age group, 48.3% for the middle-aged group, and 46.4% for the oldest age group.

**Table 37. Perception of the Use of ASEAN School Textbooks by Age**

Age Group	Use of ASEAN School Textbooks (share of respondents)						Strongly Agree (%)
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	
16–30 years	32	45	7	1	1	86	37.2
31–49 years	43	38	5	2	1	89	48.3
50+ years	13	11	3	0	1	28	46.4
<i>Total</i>	88	94	15	3	3	203	43.4

Examining the responses by gender, a greater share of the male respondents (44.3%, or 72 of 131) than the female respondents (41.7%, or 30 of 72) strongly agreed with the use of ASEAN-related school textbooks (Table 38).

**Table 38. Perception of the Use of ASEAN School Textbooks by Gender**

Gender	Use of ASEAN School Textbooks (number of respondents)						Strongly Agree (%)
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	
Female	30	36	6	0	0	72	41.7
Male	58	58	9	3	3	131	44.3
<i>Total</i>	88	94	15	3	3	203	43.4

By affiliation group, labour (74.1%, or 20 of 27 respondents) and the government officials (65.5%, or 19 of 29 respondents) had the highest shares of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement (Table 39).

**Table 39. Perception of the Use of ASEAN School Textbooks by Affiliation**

Affiliation	Use of ASEAN School Textbooks (number of respondents)						Strongly Agree (%)
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
Students	13	29	4	0	3	49	26.5
Labour	20	6	1	0	0	27	74.1
Business	6	23	4	3	0	36	16.7
Civil society	9	12	3	0	0	24	37.5
Academia	10	9	0	0	0	19	52.6
Government	19	9	1	0	0	29	65.5
Other	11	6	2	0	0	19	57.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>43.4</b>

## Pressing challenges facing Cambodia

The respondents were next asked to decide on the five most pressing problems facing Cambodia today and until 2025. Twenty-one pressing problems were prepared for respondents to choose from, and these were subdivided into three categories: economic issues (eight problems), sociocultural issues (nine problems), and governance and political issues (four problems). Each respondent was asked to select five pressing problems. Respondents could also choose ‘other’, for which they were requested to provide details.

The responses to this question show that the top five pressing challenges for Cambodia were: (1) corruption, chosen 125 times; (2) income disparity and social inequality, chosen 78 times; (3) unemployment, chosen 76 times; (4) infrastructure availability and quality, chosen 73 times; and (5) poverty, chosen 71 times (Table 40).

**Table 40. Top Five Challenges Facing Cambodia**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Corruption	125	61.6
Income disparity and social inequality	78	38.4
Unemployment	76	37.4
Infrastructure availability and quality	73	36.0
Poverty	71	35.0
Quality education provision and access	66	32.5
Trade, investment, and regulatory coherence	51	25.1
Agriculture and food security	50	24.6
Quality health services provision and access	48	23.7
Access to high-quality, affordable financial services	47	23.2
Climate change and natural disasters	47	23.2
Human rights	47	23.2
Energy provision and price	44	21.7
Customs efficiency	42	21.0
Governance	42	20.7
Poor natural resource management and biodiversity loss	33	16.3
Public participation in policymaking and programme monitoring	31	15.3
Non-tariff measures/non-tariff barriers	14	6.9
Land use, water use, and access	13	6.4
Gender parity between men and women	11	5.4
Accessible Internet connections (in relation to the digital economy)	6	3.0

## Challenges facing ASEAN

Using the same problems, the respondents were next asked what they thought were the five most pressing problems facing the ASEAN Community or region from today until 2025 that required collective action by all ASEAN Member States. As in the previous question, respondents could choose from the 21 pressing problems, and these were again subdivided into three categories: economic issues (eight problems), sociocultural issues (nine problems), and governance and political issues (four problems). The respondents were also given the choice of ‘other’ and were requested to provide details.

Using accumulated counts, the top five challenges for ASEAN were (1) climate change and natural disasters, chosen 108 times; (2) corruption, chosen 96 times; (3) trade, investment, and regulatory coherence, chosen 93 times; (4) infrastructure availability and quality, chosen 85 times; and (5) income disparity and social inequality, chosen 82 times (Table 41).

**Table 41. Top Five Challenges Facing ASEAN**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Climate change and natural disasters	108	53.2
Corruption	96	47.3
Trade, investment, and regulatory coherence	93	45.8
Infrastructure availability and quality	85	41.9
Income disparity and social inequality	82	40.4
Access to high-quality, affordable financial services	66	32.5
Unemployment	65	32.0
Human rights	58	28.6
Poor natural resource management and biodiversity loss	49	24.1
Agriculture and food security	47	23.2
Governance	46	22.7
Energy provision and price	37	18.2
Non-tariff measures/non-tariff barriers	34	16.8
Poverty	28	13.8
Public participation in policymaking and programme monitoring	26	12.8
Quality education provision and access	23	11.3
Quality health services provision and access	20	9.9
Gender parity between men and women	18	8.9
Customs efficiency	16	7.9
Land use, water use, and access	14	6.9
Accessible Internet connections (in relation to the digital economy)	4	2.0

## Aspirations for ASEAN in 2025

The respondents were then asked for their opinions regarding what they hoped would happen in ASEAN by 2025. They were presented with 15 statements and asked to state their level of agreement by choosing from among the following options: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree', and 'don't know'. The respondents were also given the choice of 'other' and were requested to provide details.

Due to errors in translation and data entry, only 188 of the 203 completed questionnaires qualified for the analysis for this section. The results are as follows.

- To the statement that by 2025, 'ASEAN is a region where goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries in the region', 47 respondents (23.2%) selected 'strongly agree', and 127 (62.6%) selected 'agree'. This was followed by 11 respondents (5.4%) who answered 'neutral' and 3 who selected 'disagree' (Table 42).

**Table 42. Perception of the Ease of Movement of Goods, Services, and Businesses in ASEAN by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	47	23.2
Agree	127	62.6
Neutral	11	5.4
Disagree	3	1.5
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- To the statement that by 2025, 'ASEAN is a region where regulations and procedures make it easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN', 43 respondents (21.2%) chose 'strongly agree', 106 (52.2%) chose 'agree', 32 (15.8%) selected 'neutral', 6 selected 'disagree', and only 1 chose 'don't know' (Table 43).



**Table 43. Perception of the Ease of Movement of Skilled Workers and Professionals in ASEAN by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	43	21.2
Agree	106	52.2
Neutral	32	15.8
Disagree	6	3.0
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Don't know	1	0.5
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- The next statement was that by 2025, 'ASEAN and its member countries provide basic social protection and health services to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN'. For this statement, 49 respondents (24.1%) chose 'strongly agree', 97 (47.8%) chose 'agree', 34 (16.7%) selected 'neutral', 7 selected 'disagree', and 1 selected 'strongly disagree' (Table 44).

**Table 44. Perception of the Provision of Social Protection and Health Services by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	49	24.1
Agree	97	47.8
Neutral	34	16.7
Disagree	7	3.4
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- In response to the statement that by 2025, 'ASEAN is a region of good governance and very much less corruption', only 53 respondents (26.1%) selected 'strongly agree'. Meanwhile, 73 (36%) answered 'agree', 37 (18.2%) selected 'neutral', 22 (10.8%) selected 'disagree', and 3 selected 'strongly disagree' (Table 45).

**Table 45. Perception of Achieving Good Governance and Less Corruption by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	53	26.1
Agree	73	36.0
Neutral	37	18.2
Disagree	22	10.8
Strongly disagree	3	1.5
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- For the statement that ‘ASEAN is a region where it is easy to physically move around through roads, railways, air, and shipping’, 57 respondents (28.1%) chose ‘strongly agree’. This was followed by 102 respondents (50.2%) who chose ‘agree’, while 23 (11.3%) selected ‘neutral’, 4 selected ‘disagree’, and 2 selected ‘strongly disagree’ (Table 46).

**Table 46. Perception of the Ease of Transport Connectivity by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	57	28.1
Agree	102	50.2
Neutral	23	11.3
Disagree	4	2.0
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- To the statement that by 2025, ‘the ASEAN Community is a region where people and businesses can digitally interact and communicate easily with one another’, 42 (20.7%) respondents strongly agreed, and 116 (57.1%) agreed. Meanwhile, 24 (11.8%) selected ‘neutral’, only 2 chose ‘disagree’, 1 chose ‘strongly disagree’, and 3 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 47).

**Table 47. Perception of the Ease of Digital Interaction and Communication by 2025**

	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Share of Responses (%)</b>
Strongly agree	42	20.7
Agree	116	57.1
Neutral	24	11.8
Disagree	2	1.0
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
Don't know	3	1.5
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- In response to the statement that ‘ASEAN peoples are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes’, 40 respondents (19.7%) chose ‘strongly agree’, while 94 (46.3%) chose ‘agree’, 33 (16.3%) selected ‘neutral’, 18 chose ‘disagree’, and 3 chose ‘strongly disagree’.

**Table 48. Perception of Deep Awareness of the ASEAN Community by 2025**

	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Share of Responses (%)</b>
Strongly agree	40	19.7
Agree	94	46.3
Neutral	33	16.3
Disagree	18	8.9
Strongly disagree	3	1.5
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- To the statement that by 2025, ‘the ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples’, 42 respondents (20.7%) strongly agreed, while 95 (46.8%) selected ‘agree’, 38 (18.7%) selected ‘neutral’, 10 selected ‘disagree’, 2 selected ‘strongly disagree’, and 1 chose ‘don't know’ (Table 49).

**Table 49. Perception of Deep Engagement and Benefit from the ASEAN Community by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	42	20.7
Agree	95	46.8
Neutral	38	18.7
Disagree	10	4.9
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don't know	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- Next was the following statement: ‘There is equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.’ For this statement, 43 (21.2%) respondents strongly agreed, 92 (45.3%) agreed, 40 (19.7%) were neutral, and 13 (6.4%) disagreed (Table 50).

**Table 50. Perception of Equitable Access to Opportunities**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	43	21.2
Agree	92	45.3
Neutral	40	19.7
Disagree	13	6.4
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Don't know	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- In response to the statement that ‘human rights and minorities in the region are effectively protected’, 46 respondents (22.7%) selected ‘strongly agree’, 85 (41.9%) selected ‘agree’, 44 (21.7%) selected ‘neutral’, 12 selected ‘disagree’, and 1 selected ‘strongly disagree’ (Table 51).

**Table 51. Perception of the Effective Protection of Human Rights**

	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Share of Responses (%)</b>
Strongly agree	46	22.7
Agree	85	41.9
Neutral	44	21.7
Disagree	12	5.9
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- There was strong agreement with the statement that ‘the region’s biodiversity and natural resources are sustainably managed and conserved’. Of the respondents, 51 (25.1%) strongly agreed, and 60 (29.6%) agreed. Meanwhile, 49 (24.1%) selected ‘neutral’, 25 (12.3%) disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 52).

**Table 52. Perception of Sustainable Environmental Conservation and Management in ASEAN**

	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Share of Responses (%)</b>
Strongly agree	51	25.1
Agree	60	29.6
Neutral	49	24.1
Disagree	25	12.3
Strongly disagree	3	1.5
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- There were mixed opinions on the statement that by 2025, ‘ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today’. Of the respondents, 46 (22.7%) strongly agreed, 78 (38.4%) agreed, and 29 (14.3%) were neutral. However, 27 respondents (13.3%) disagreed, and 7 strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 53).

**Table 53. Perception of Achieving Less Pollution and More Liveable ASEAN Cities by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	46	22.7
Agree	78	38.4
Neutral	29	14.3
Disagree	27	13.3
Strongly disagree	7	3.4
Don't know	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- There was strong agreement with the statement: ‘ASEAN is able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.’ Fifty-five respondents (27.1%) strongly agreed, and 84 (41.4%) agreed. Meanwhile, 41 respondents (20.1%) were neutral, and 8 disagreed with the statement (Table 54).

**Table 54. Perception of the Ability to Respond Faster to Natural Disasters and Health Hazards in ASEAN by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	55	27.1
Agree	84	41.4
Neutral	41	20.2
Disagree	8	3.9
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Don't know	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- Many respondents expressed high aspirations for the statement that ‘ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global negotiations and forums’. Fifty respondents (24.6%) strongly agreed, and 84 (41.4%) agreed, but 47 (23.2%) were neutral, 6 disagreed, and 1 strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 55).

**Table 55. Perception of a Strong Global Role for ASEAN by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	50	24.6
Agree	84	41.4
Neutral	47	23.2
Disagree	6	3.0
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
Don't know	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- Respondents also showed strong agreement with the statement, ‘ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world (e.g. the United States and China) to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region’. Fifty-five respondents (27.1%) strongly agreed, 86 (42.4%) agreed, 40 (19.7%) were neutral, 4 disagreed, 2 strongly disagreed, and 1 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 56).

**Table 56. Perception of ASEAN’s Deep Engagement in the Region and the World by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	55	27.1
Agree	86	42.4
Neutral	40	19.7
Disagree	4	2.0
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don't know	1	0.5
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

## Expectations for ASEAN by 2025

To examine their perceptions of the future of ASEAN, the survey asked respondents about what they believed and expected would happen in ASEAN by 2025. They were presented with 15 statements and for each statement were requested to select one of six

answers: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’, and ‘don’t know’. Respondents were also given the choice of ‘other’ and were requested to provide details. Due to errors in translation and data entry, only 188 of the 203 completed questionnaires qualified for the analysis in this section.

- The respondents expressed strong agreement with the statement: ‘Consumers have easy access to goods and services from any ASEAN country.’ Of the respondents, 37 (18.2%) strongly agreed, 125 (61.6%) agreed, 15 (7.4%) were neutral, 5 disagreed, 3 strongly disagreed, and 3 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 57).

**Table 57. Perception of Access to Goods, Services, and Businesses**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	37	18.2
Agree	125	61.6
Neutral	15	7.4
Disagree	5	2.5
Strongly disagree	3	1.5
Don't know	3	1.5
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- Next was the following statement: ‘It is easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.’ For this statement, 38 respondents (18.7%) chose ‘strongly agree’, 104 (51.2%) chose ‘agree’, 30 (14.8%) selected ‘neutral’, 4 chose ‘strongly disagree’, and 4 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 58).

**Table 58. Perception of the Ease of Movement of Skilled Workers and Professionals**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	38	18.7
Agree	104	51.2
Neutral	30	14.8
Disagree	8	3.9
Strongly disagree	4	2.0
Don't know	4	2.0
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0



- There was a high level of expectation for the statement that ‘basic social protection and health services are provided to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN’. For this statement, 47 respondents (23.2%) strongly agreed, 89 (43.8%) agreed, 36 (17.7%) were neutral, 6 disagreed, 5 strongly disagreed, and 5 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 59).

**Table 59. Perception of the Provision of Social Protection and Basic Health Services**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	47	23.2
Agree	89	43.8
Neutral	36	17.7
Disagree	6	3.0
Strongly disagree	5	2.5
Don't know	5	2.5
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- Responses to the following statement were mixed: ‘There is good governance and very much less corruption. Forty-seven respondents (23.2%) strongly agreed and 70 (34.5%) agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 35 (17.2%) were neutral, 20 disagreed, 6 strongly disagreed, and 10 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 60).

**Table 60. Perception of Achieving Good Governance and Less Corruption by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	47	23.2
Agree	70	34.5
Neutral	35	17.2
Disagree	20	9.9
Strongly disagree	6	3.0
Don't know	10	4.9
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- There was strong agreement with the statement: ‘ASEAN countries are well connected through roads, railways, air, and shipping.’ While 59 respondents (27.6%) strongly agreed, and 100 (49.3%) agreed, 27 (13.3%) were neutral, 2 disagreed, 2 strongly disagreed, and 1 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 61).

**Table 61. Perception of Strong Transport Connectivity by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	56	27.6
Agree	100	49.3
Neutral	27	13.3
Disagree	2	1.0
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don't know	1	0.5
<i>Total</i>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- The respondents showed strong agreement with the expectation that ‘people and businesses can communicate easily with one another through ICT’. Forty respondents (19.7%) strongly agreed, 103 (50.7%) agreed, 29 (14.3%) were neutral, 5 disagreed, 2 strongly disagreed, and 9 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 62).

**Table 62. Perception of the Ease of Communication through ICT**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	40	19.7
Agree	103	50.7
Neutral	29	14.3
Disagree	5	2.5
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don't know	9	4.4
<i>Total</i>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- The respondents expressed strong agreement with the statement: ‘ASEAN peoples are well aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.’ For this statement, 31 respondents (15.3%) strongly agreed, 90 (44.3%) agreed, 47 (23.2%) were neutral, 9 disagreed, 2 strongly disagreed, and 9 indicated ‘don’t know’ (Table 63).

**Table 63. Perception of Awareness of the ASEAN Community by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	31	15.3
Agree	90	44.3
Neutral	47	23.2
Disagree	9	4.4
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don't know	9	4.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- There was also good agreement with the following statement: ‘The ASEAN Community strongly engages and benefits its peoples.’ Of the respondents, 31 (15.3%) strongly agreed, 90 (44.3%) agreed, 47 (23.2%) were neutral, 9 disagreed, 2 strongly disagreed, and 9 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 64).

**Table 64. Perception of Strong Engagement and Benefit from the ASEAN Community**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	31	15.3
Agree	90	44.3
Neutral	47	23.2
Disagree	9	4.4
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don't know	9	4.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- Many respondents agreed with the statement: ‘There is equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.’ For this statement, 42 respondents (20.7%) chose ‘strongly agree’, 88 (43.3%) chose ‘agree’, 41 (20.2%) selected ‘neutral’, 9 selected ‘disagree’, 1 selected ‘strongly disagree’, and 7 selected ‘don’t know’ (Table 65).

**Table 65. Perception of Equitable Access to Opportunities for ASEAN Peoples**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	42	20.7
Agree	88	43.3
Neutral	41	20.2
Disagree	9	4.4
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
Don't know	7	3.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- The results also show strong agreement with the expectation that ‘human rights and minorities in the region are effectively protected’. As many as 42 respondents (20.7%) strongly agreed, and 82 (40.4%) respondents agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 38 (18.7%) were neutral, 12 disagreed, 5 strongly disagreed, and 9 did not know (Table 66).

**Table 66. Perception of the Effective Protection of Human Rights and Minorities in ASEAN**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	42	20.7
Agree	82	40.4
Neutral	38	18.7
Disagree	12	5.9
Strongly disagree	5	2.5
Don't know	9	4.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- There was also a high level of agreement with the expectation that ‘the region’s biodiversity and natural resources are sustainably managed and conserved’. For this statement, 48 (23.6%) respondents strongly agreed, and 51 (25.1%) agreed. Meanwhile, 62 (30.5%) were neutral, 16 disagreed, 6 strongly disagreed, and 5 selected ‘don’t know’ (Table 67).

**Table 67. Perception of the Sustainable Management and Conservation of the Environment in ASEAN**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	48	23.6
Agree	51	25.1
Neutral	62	30.5
Disagree	16	7.9
Strongly disagree	6	3.0
Don't know	5	2.5
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- To the statement, ‘ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today’, 39 respondents (19.2%) strongly agreed, 74 (36.5%) agreed, 44 (21.7%) were neutral, 18 disagreed, 6 strongly disagreed, and 7 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 68).

**Table 68. Perception of Achieving Less Pollution and More Liveable ASEAN Cities**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	39	19.2
Agree	74	36.5
Neutral	44	21.7
Disagree	18	8.9
Strongly disagree	6	3.0
Don't know	7	3.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- Many agreed with the statement: ‘ASEAN is able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.’ Fifty-four respondents (26.6%) strongly agreed, and 61 (30%) agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 60 (29.6%) were neutral, 5 disagreed, 1 strongly disagreed, and 7 selected ‘don’t know’ (Table 69).

**Table 69. Perception of ASEAN’s Faster Response to Natural Disasters and Health Hazards by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	54	26.6
Agree	61	30.0
Neutral	60	29.6
Disagree	5	2.5
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
Don’t know	7	3.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- There was strong agreement with the statement: ‘ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global negotiations and forums.’ In response to this statement, 48 (23.6%) chose ‘strongly agree’, 83 (40.9%) chose ‘agree’, 36 (17.7%) selected ‘neutral’, 8 selected ‘disagree’, 2 selected ‘strongly disagree’, and 11 chose ‘don’t know’ (Table 70).

**Table 70. Perception of ASEAN as an Important Player in Global Negotiations and Forums by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	48	23.6
Agree	83	40.9
Neutral	36	17.7
Disagree	8	3.9
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Don’t know	11	5.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

- There was general agreement with the statement: ‘ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world (e.g. the United States and China) to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.’ While 53 (26.1%) respondents strongly agreed and 82 (40.4%) agreed, 41 (20.2%) were neutral, 4 disagreed, and 7 selected ‘don’t know’ (Table 71).

**Table 71. Perception of ASEAN’s Deep Engagement of Powers in the Region and the World by 2025**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	53	26.1
Agree	82	40.4
Neutral	41	20.2
Disagree	4	2.0
Strongly disagree	1	0.5
Don’t know	7	3.4
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0

## Upgrading and monitoring the capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat

The survey asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea of gradually upgrading the implementing and monitoring capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat to meet the region’s increasing challenges. Five possible answers were available for respondents to choose from: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’.

The respondents showed strong agreement with upgrading the capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat. Of the respondents, 83 (40.9%) strongly agreed, and 97 (47.8%) agreed. Only 22 (10.8%) were neutral, and 1 respondent disagreed (Table 72).

**Table 72. Perception of Upgrading the Capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat**

	Number of Responses	Share of Responses (%)
Strongly agree	83	40.9
Agree	97	47.8
Neutral	22	10.8
Disagree	1	0.5
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Findings from the Focus Group Discussion

A study team from the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace organised and facilitated an FGD, which was held in Phnom Penh with 22 stakeholders: 5 university students, 3 participants from non-governmental organisations and academia, 10 business participants, and 4 government officials. During the FGD, stakeholders were asked to elaborate on their answers to some of the key questions from the survey questionnaires. Participants of the FGD were also given time to complete their survey questionnaires before and during the meeting.

The feedback from the discussions in various sections was mostly similar to the results of the survey. However, there were deeper discussions and analysis on some issues, such as the costs and benefits of ASEAN membership, people's awareness and general conceptions of ASEAN, and the challenges faced by Cambodia and by ASEAN as a whole.

Similar to the survey, the FGD showed strong aspirations, concerns, and hopes for ASEAN. Most of the participants indicated they were proud to be ASEAN citizens and would like to continue to reside in ASEAN. Many hoped that ASEAN would bring further prestige and prosperity to Cambodia. Participants mentioned that without membership of ASEAN, Cambodia would not be as prosperous as it was today. In general, they expressed positive opinions about the association. Their concerns were mainly related to Cambodia's ability to participate in the ASEAN single market and the free flow of goods, services, and skilled labour, and the concern that Cambodia would face competition for market access.

The respondents were relatively well aware of ASEAN as an association of 10 countries and could name all of the member states. However, many did not know the exact or



technical details of the operations or functions of ASEAN or how Cambodia could benefit from ASEAN. Among the participants in the FGD, those from academia and the government officials had the greatest understanding and awareness of ASEAN. The business group seemed to have limited knowledge of ASEAN's opportunities for trade, investment, and business as the participants tended to be more involved in local markets and markets in the European Union and North America than in ASEAN markets.

Almost all of the participants thought that ASEAN had brought many positive impacts to Cambodia across many fields, especially in economic development. The participants considered ASEAN to be a driving force for Cambodia's reforms and for improving the country's image and reputation in the international arena, and they considered ASEAN to be a symbol of regional integration and unity.

However, some of the participants felt that while Cambodia had benefited in many sectors as a result of being a member of ASEAN, the country still faced many current and future challenges. The respondents considered the main challenges to be the disparities in wealth and development that still exist among ASEAN Member States and the Cambodian population. Poverty, unemployment, and poor infrastructure are still the main challenges for Cambodia. To maximise the benefits from regional integration, Cambodia should address all these challenges with efforts to further its reforms and engage more in the implementation of ASEAN's agreements and protocols.

The participants highlighted various challenges that ASEAN as a body faces. Participants from academia and the student group proposed that ASEAN would face problems with city pollution due to poor governance and inadequate city planning. The business group expressed concerns for the present weak status of Cambodia in regional competition within ASEAN. Meanwhile, the civil society organisation representatives thought the big challenges for Cambodia and ASEAN were corruption, human rights issues, and the management of natural resources and the environment.

## Conclusion

ASEAN has been operational for 50 years since its founding in 1967, and the association has made remarkable achievements in all sectors. From five founding members to 10 fully integrated members, ASEAN can be considered as one of the great successes of regional integration and a symbol of regional integration and unity.

The survey for this study shows high awareness, aspirations, and positive perceptions among Cambodians of ASEAN across different occupation, age, and gender groups. The

majority of the respondents expressed positivity towards being ASEAN citizens and were optimistic in their strong aspirations, concerns, and hopes for ASEAN. However, not all Cambodians share similar views, and many lack awareness of ASEAN or do not think positively of the association. As such, a minority of the respondents showed limited awareness of ASEAN and did not have strong aspirations, concerns, or hopes for it.

The survey found that the top five most pressing challenges for Cambodia were corruption, income disparity and social inequality, unemployment, infrastructure availability and quality, and poverty. For ASEAN, the top five pressing challenges were climate change and natural disasters; corruption; trade, investment, and regulatory coherence; infrastructure availability and quality; and income disparity and social inequality. The respondents felt that corruption, income disparity and social inequality, and infrastructure availability and quality were common concerns for Cambodia and ASEAN.

Although ASEAN has carried out its roles effectively and successfully, there is still a need to improve by encouraging participation; promoting awareness; and strengthening the role of media, school textbooks, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Based on the results of the survey, while ASEAN has accomplished a great deal during its first 50 years, its member states should work together to reduce the development gaps and strengthen ASEAN's role in promoting a regional architecture for peace and prosperity for the people in the region.

