

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

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## Background

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2017, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, in partnership with the National Institute for Economic Research, carried out a public-opinion survey on the aspirations, expectations, concerns and hopes of the Lao PDR people for ASEAN. This national-level survey was part of the regional ASEAN@50: Retrospective and Perspectives on the Making, Substance, Significance, and Future of ASEAN project.

The survey was conducted electronically through the Survey Monkey platform and on a paper basis through questionnaires sent out to the general public in Lao PDR. However, the respondents that participated in the survey had limited diversity in their backgrounds as a substantial share of the respondents were students aged between 15 and 30 years old. This was likely because students are more active in participating in this kind of exercise, especially through electronic platforms. There was a limited number of respondents older than 50 years old. This could have been because the majority of people in that age group are not familiar with electronic surveys, and the paper-based survey did not have adequate outreach. In addition, the survey was not able to draw participation from satisfactory numbers of respondents from academia, business, civil society organisations/non-governmental organisations (CSOs/NGOs), or labour. This limits detailed analysis at the subcategory level.

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

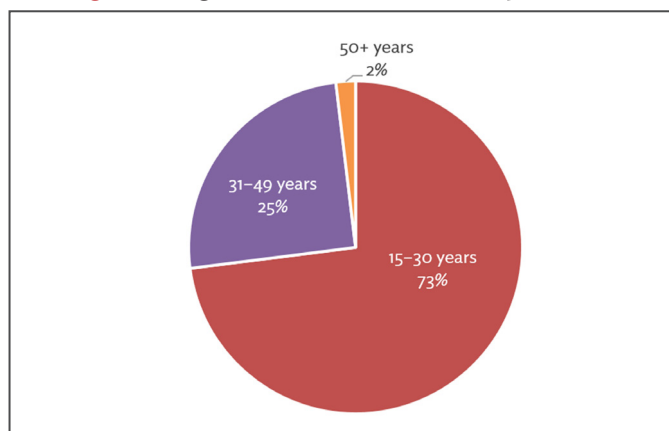
In addition to the survey, the study included two focus group discussions (FGDs). The first FGD was carried out with a group of 12 students, mostly university students in their early twenties. The second was with a mix of young and senior government officials.

## Survey Results

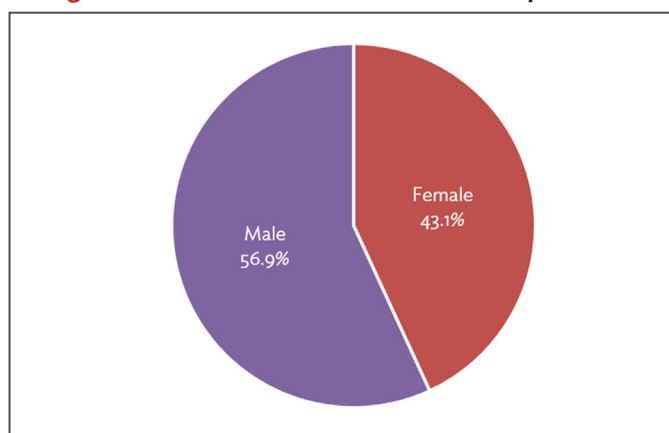
### Characteristics of the respondents

A total of 211 respondents took part in the survey. A majority of 73% (154 respondents) were between the ages of 15 and 30. About 25.1% (53 respondents) were aged 30–49, and only 1.9% (4 respondents), were aged 50 years or older (Figure 1). The survey drew participation from a greater proportion of the male population, with 120 male respondents (56.9%) and only 91 female respondents (Figure 2).

**Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents**

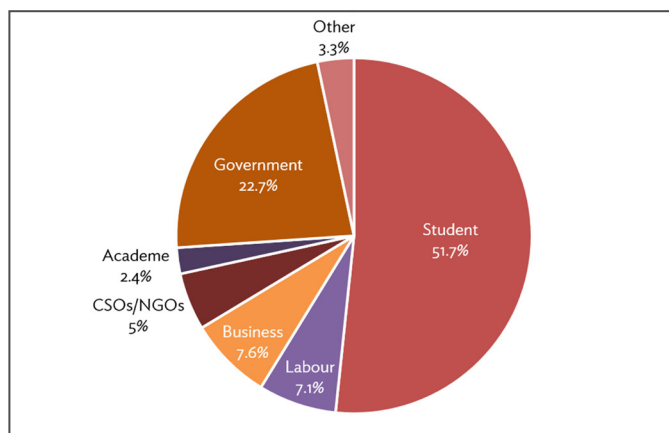


**Figure 2: Gender Distribution of the Respondents**



In terms of occupational background, there was limited diversity among the respondents as 109 (51.7%) were students (Figure 3). The second-largest group was government officials, which totalled 48 respondents (22.7%). Next were respondents from the business category, which accounted for 7.6%. Those from the labour category accounted for 7.1%, followed by representatives from CSOs/NGOs (5.2%), academia (2.4%), and others (3.3%).

**Figure 3: Affiliation of the Respondents**



CSO = civil society organisation, NGO = non-governmental organisation..

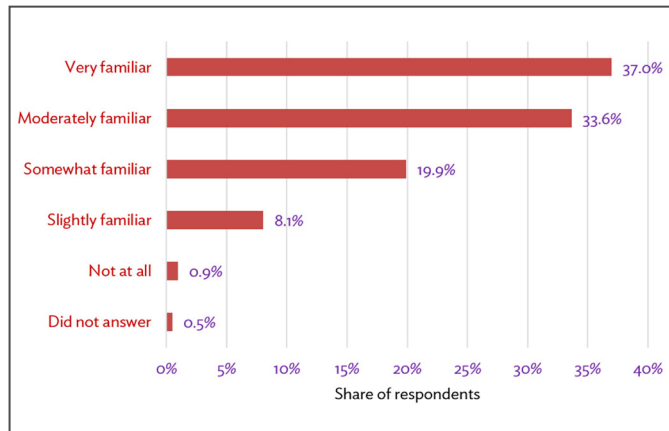
## Voices of ASEAN

### Degree of awareness of ASEAN

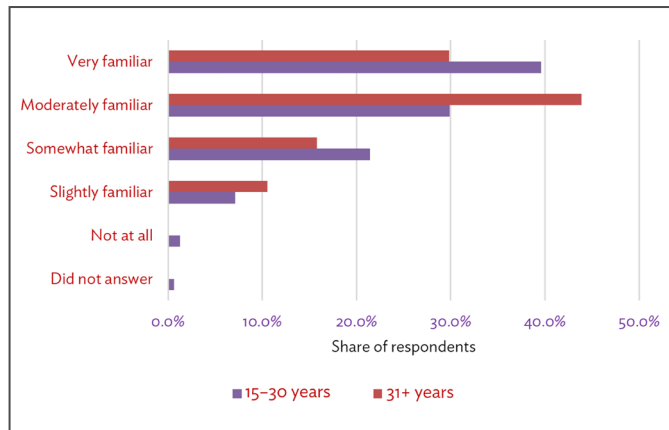
The survey asked the respondents to indicate the extent of their awareness of ASEAN. The respondents were asked to choose from five levels of awareness: ‘very familiar’, ‘moderately familiar’, ‘somewhat familiar’, ‘slightly familiar’, and ‘not at all familiar’. Of the 211 survey respondents, 210 answered this question. The majority claimed that they were well aware of ASEAN issues: 37% said they were very familiar, and 33.6% indicated being moderately familiar (Figure 4). A sizeable proportion of respondents, 19.9%, claimed they were somewhat familiar with ASEAN. Another 8.1% indicated they were only slightly familiar with ASEAN, while 0.9% were not at all familiar with ASEAN.

Since there were only four respondents aged 50 years old or older, these were grouped with respondents aged 31–49 for comparison purposes. Figure 5 shows that a relatively larger proportion of respondents aged 15–30 indicated they were very familiar with ASEAN (39.6%) compared to those who were 31 years old or older (29.8%). However, a larger share of those aged 31 years or older (43.9%) indicated they were moderately familiar with ASEAN. Examining the results by gender, Figure 6 shows that male respondents were more familiar with ASEAN than their female counterparts.

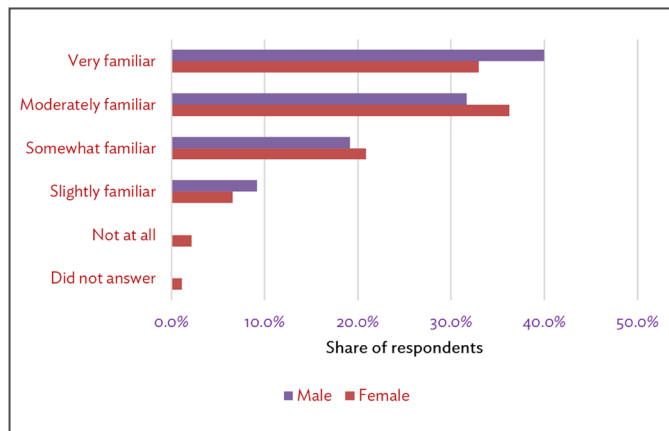
**Figure 4: Awareness of ASEAN**



**Figure 5: Familiarity with ASEAN by Age**



**Figure 6: Familiarity with ASEAN by Gender**

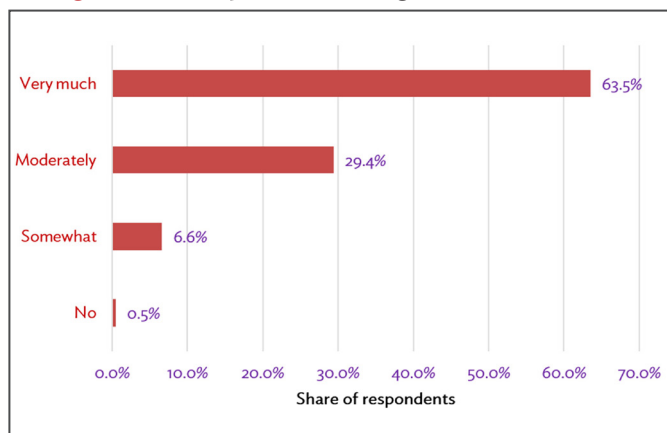


The FGDs revealed the respondents generally obtained information about ASEAN from Internet and media sources, including television and newspapers. In addition, some participants mentioned that because Lao PDR had been the host of the ASEAN Summit and related summits in 2016, they had seen topics on ASEAN being covered and discussed more frequently.

## Perceptions on ASEAN citizenship

The survey asked the participants to what degree they felt they were ASEAN citizens. Four choices were given: ‘very much’, ‘moderately’, ‘somewhat’, and ‘no’. Almost two-thirds of respondents, 63.5%, felt very much that they were ASEAN citizens (Figure 7). A modest share of respondents, 29.4%, indicated feeling moderately as ASEAN citizens. This was followed by 6.6% of respondents who felt somewhat as ASEAN citizens. Around 0.5% of respondents indicated they did not feel they were ASEAN citizens.

**Figure 7: Perceptions of Being an ASEAN Citizen**



A similar pattern emerges when examining the responses by demographic and occupational background. At least 60% of the respondents in each group indicated they felt very much as ASEAN citizens. For example, as much as 71.7% of the respondents aged 31–49 and 61.7% of respondents aged 15–30 indicated they felt very much as ASEAN citizens. Similarly, 65.8% of the male respondents and 60.4% of the female respondents felt very much as ASEAN citizens.

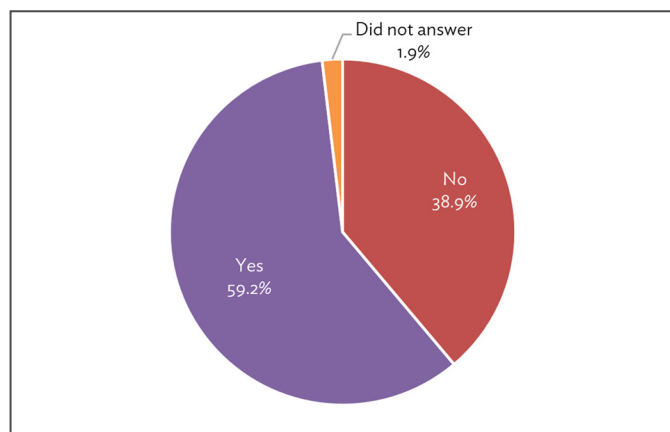
In the FGDs, participants who felt very much as ASEAN citizens said they felt so because Lao PDR was part of ASEAN, and ASEAN itself had become increasingly integrated through the establishment of the ASEAN Community. This shows evidence of increased integration in the region. Interestingly, those who had moderate feelings of being ASEAN citizens argued that although there was increased integration in the region, differences in the rules, regulations, and norms of each member country acted as

barriers to free movement between countries. In addition, some felt that other ASEAN Member States did not know much about Lao PDR, and they also did not know much about other countries.

## Aspirations, concerns, and hopes for ASEAN

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had aspirations, expectations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN. The respondents were given the choices ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and were asked to provide details if they answered ‘yes’. Of the 211 respondents, 1.9% did not answer this question, while 38.9% selected ‘no’, and 59.2% selected ‘yes’ (Figure 8). Examining the responses by demographic and occupational background, at least 50% of respondents in each group indicated having aspirations, expectations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN.

**Figure 8: Aspirations, Expectations, Concerns, and Hopes for ASEAN**

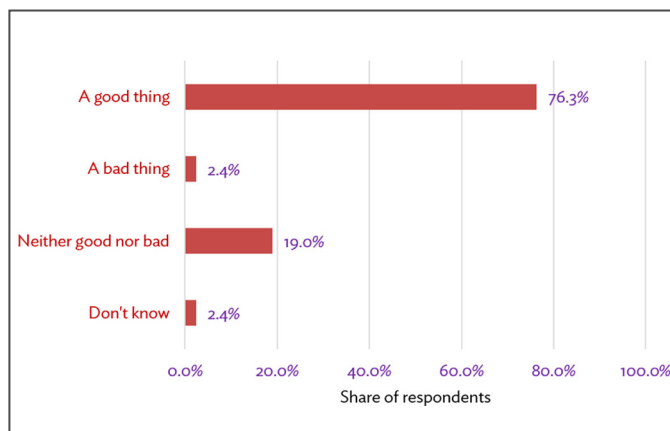


Of those who indicated having aspirations, expectations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN, most expressed aspirations, expectations, or hopes, and very few expressed concerns. Most of the aspirations, hopes, and expectations were for ASEAN to bring about deepened regional integration and closer regional cooperation. A sizeable number of respondents had the expectation that ASEAN would benefit its member countries and their people in terms of development and a reduction in the development gap in the region. Some hoped that ASEAN would benefit Lao PDR and contribute to its development. However, concerns were also raised, including that of higher competition and the ability of Lao PDR to compete. The responses gathered from the FGDs were along similar lines.

## Perception of Lao PDR's membership of ASEAN

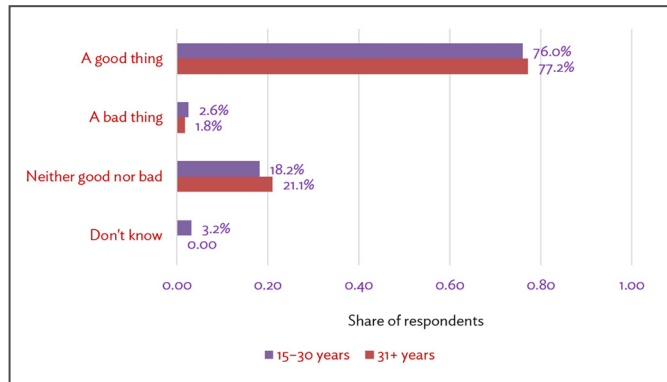
The survey asked respondents about their perception of their country's membership of ASEAN. Four choices were given: 'a good thing', 'a bad thing', 'neither good nor bad', and 'don't know'. Of the 211 respondents, one respondent did not answer this question (Figure 9). Meanwhile, 76.3% indicated that Lao PDR's membership of ASEAN was a good thing. Only 2.4% thought it was a bad thing, and 19% said it was neither good nor bad.

**Figure 9: Perception of Lao PDR's Membership of ASEAN**

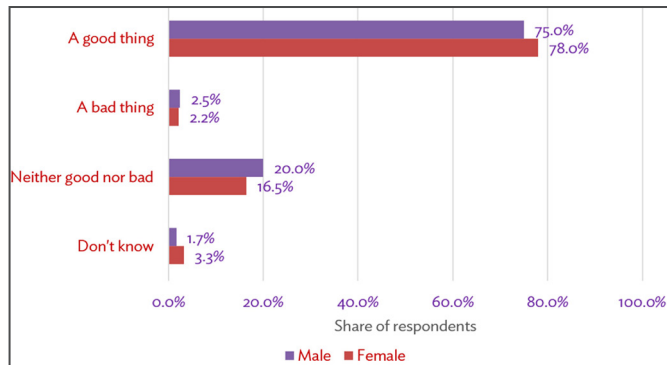


Figures 10 and 11 show that the ratios of respondents by age and by gender did not differ much. Of the respondents aged 15–30, 76% thought that Lao PDR's membership in ASEAN was a good thing, as did 77.2% of the respondents aged 31 and over. Very small proportions of respondents – 2.6% of those aged 15–30 and 1.8% of those aged 31 or older – thought ASEAN membership was a bad thing for their country. The shares of respondents that indicated 'neither good nor bad' were 18.1% for the younger group and 21.1% for the older group. Similarly, comparing the respondents by gender, high proportions of both the male and female respondents thought Lao PDR's membership in ASEAN was a good thing, at 75% and 78%, respectively. Meanwhile, 2.5% of the male respondents and 2.2% of the female respondents thought ASEAN membership was bad for Lao PDR. Interestingly, as much as 83.3% of the government officials thought that the country's membership in ASEAN was a good thing, and none thought it was a bad thing (Figure 12).

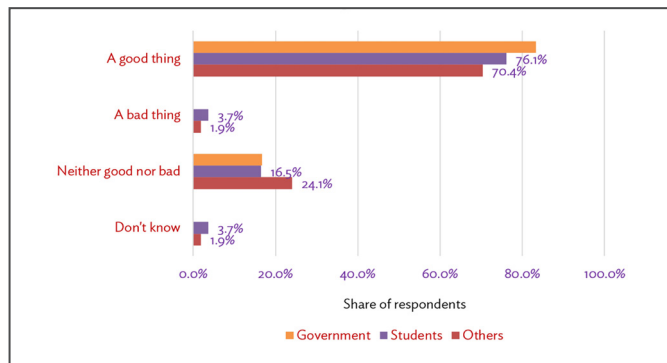
**Figure 10: Perception of Lao PDR's Membership of ASEAN by Age**



**Figure 11: Perception of Lao PDR's Membership of ASEAN by Gender**



**Figure 12: Perception of Lao PDR's Membership of ASEAN by Affiliation**



The FGDs showed that overall, the majority of the participants viewed Lao PDR's membership in ASEAN as a good thing. Many of the students claimed that ASEAN was an international platform for the country to promote itself and enhance cooperation

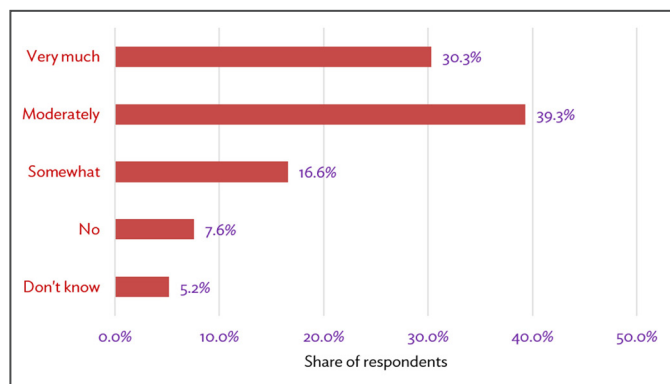


with other countries. Some government officials indicated that as a small, land-locked country, Lao PDR had benefited from joint political and economic bargaining power as a member of ASEAN. Some mentioned that ASEAN framework had helped the country improve its domestic regulatory framework. Some of the participants who thought that Lao PDR's membership was neither good nor bad explained that they said so because they had not noticed any substantial impacts from Lao PDR's membership of ASEAN.

## Perception of the benefit from ASEAN membership

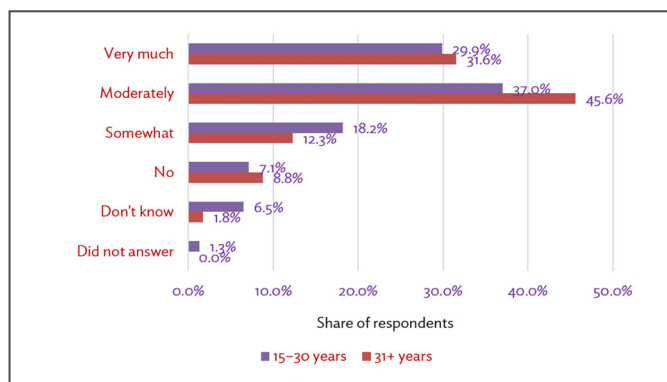
In addition to the previous question, the survey asked respondents whether they thought Lao PDR had benefited from being a member of ASEAN. The respondents chose from five options: 'very much', 'moderately', 'somewhat', 'no', and 'don't know'. Although a large proportion of respondents felt that Lao PDR's membership in ASEAN was a good thing, only 30.3% of the total respondents thought the country had benefited very much from its membership (Figure 13). The largest share of respondents, 39.3%, felt that Lao PDR had moderately benefited from its membership, 16.6% thought the country had somewhat benefited, 7.6% thought the country had not benefited, and 5.2% indicated they did not know. For this question, 0.9% of the respondents did not answer.

**Figure 13: Perception of the Benefit from ASEAN Membership**

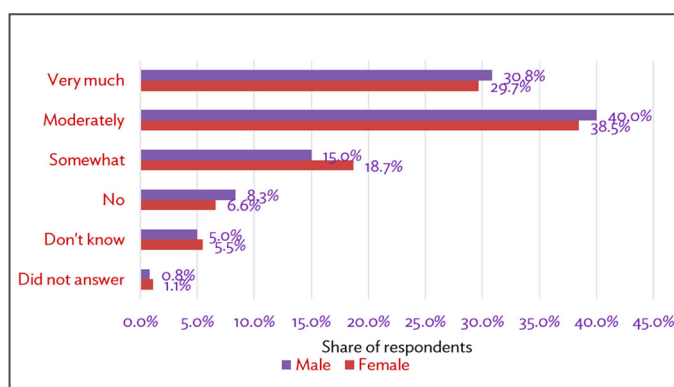


Figures 14, 15, and 16 show the shares of responses by age, gender, and affiliation. Overall, comparing across age and gender groups, the shares of responses for each choice show very similar patterns. The largest shares of respondents selected 'moderately', followed by shares of those who chose 'very much', 'somewhat', and 'no'. Interestingly, when comparing by occupational background, we can see that the largest group that felt Lao PDR had benefited very much from ASEAN was the government-affiliated respondents (Figure 16).

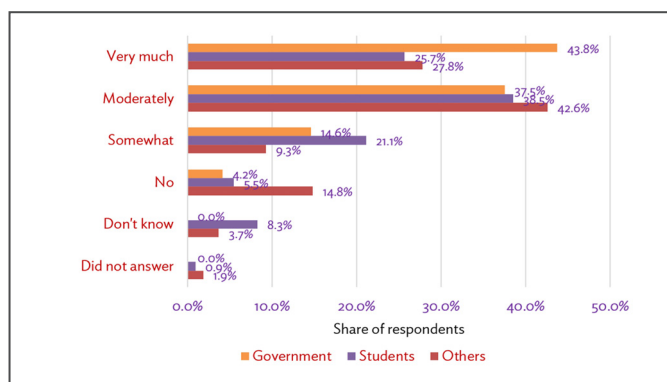
**Figure 14: Perception of the Benefit from ASEAN Membership by Age**



**Figure 15: Perception of the Benefit from ASEAN Membership by Gender**



**Figure 16: Perception of the Benefit from ASEAN Membership by Affiliation**



In the FGDs, the majority of the participants in the student group thought that Lao PDR had benefited from ASEAN membership only moderately, while the majority of participants in the government official group thought the country had benefited very much from ASEAN membership. Following on from the previous question, the student

group elaborated that having ASEAN as a platform to promote the country had boosted the country's tourism sector as well as trade and investment. The student group also added that strengthened regional cooperation had allowed the country to learn from and other countries' experience and technical know-how, especially relating to economic and social development.

## Concern if Lao PDR were to leave ASEAN

The survey next asked whether respondents would be concerned if Lao PDR were to leave ASEAN. The respondents could select one of five choices: 'extremely concerned', 'moderately concerned', 'somewhat concerned', 'slightly concerned', or 'not at all concerned'. Consistent with the results of the previous questions, the largest share of respondents, 40.8%, indicated they would be extremely concerned if Lao PDR were to leave ASEAN (Figure 17). Meanwhile, 28% indicated they would be moderately concerned, 16.6% said they would be somewhat concerned, and 5.2% said they would be slightly concerned. A sizeable share of respondents, 8.5%, indicated they would not be at all concerned if the country were to leave ASEAN, while 0.9% of the respondents did not answer the question.

**Figure 17: Concern if Lao PDR Were to Leave ASEAN**

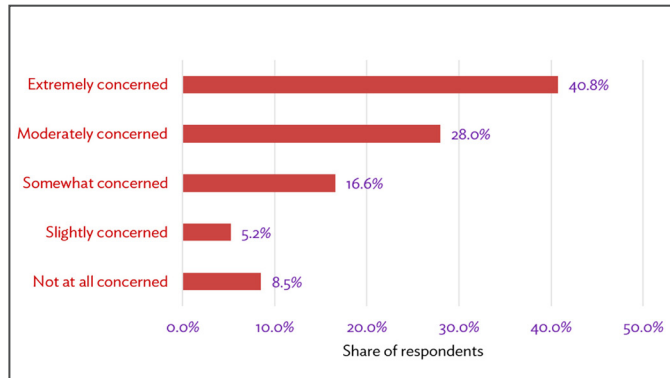


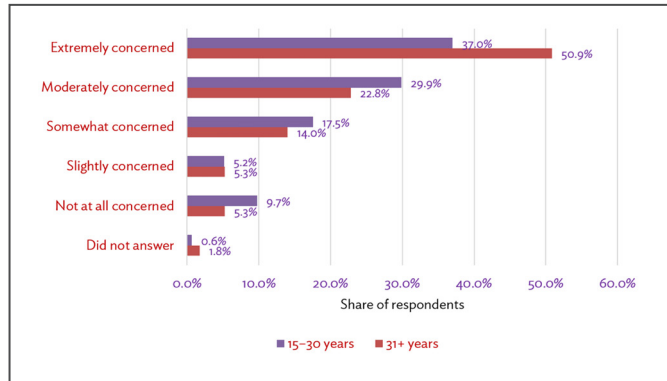
Figure 18 shows that the respondents aged 31 years old or above would be more concerned if Lao PDR were to leave ASEAN than those aged 15–30. Almost 51% of the older age group, but only 37% of the younger age group, said they would be extremely concerned. The younger age group also had a higher proportion of respondents that answered they would not be at all concerned if Lao PDR were to leave ASEAN. Comparing the responses by gender, the shares of male and female respondents were almost identical in their concern if Lao PDR were to leave ASEAN, at 40.8% and 40.7%, respectively (Figure 19). However, the share of female respondents that indicated they would be moderately concerned was much higher than for the male respondents, while a higher ratio of male respondents indicated they would not be concerned at all.

This reflects that overall, female respondents indicated greater concern than their male counterparts.

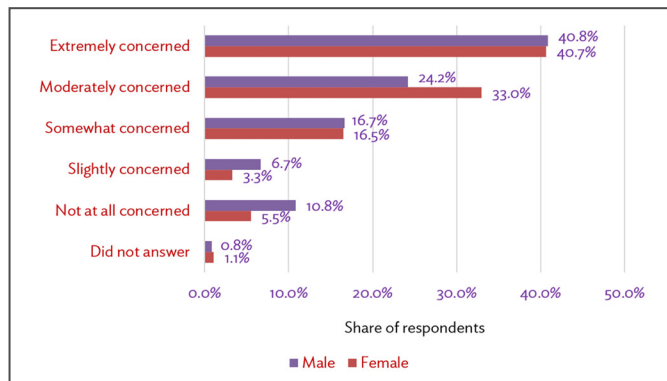
Figure 20 shows the responses by affiliation. Overall, the government respondents indicated greater concern than the students and other respondents. Among the government officials, 50% said they would be extremely concerned if Lao PDR were to leave ASEAN, while none said they would not be at all concerned. Meanwhile, 42.6% of students and 35.8% of respondents with other affiliations indicated they would be extremely concerned, with about 11% for both answering that they would not be at all concerned.

During the FGDs, the majority of the participants elaborated that because they thought ASEAN membership was a good thing and Lao PDR had benefited from ASEAN, they would be very much concerned if the country were to leave ASEAN. They claimed that Lao PDR would lose international creditability to a certain extent, and it would be more difficult for the country to ensure good cooperation with other countries in the region. They added that this would have a negative impact on the country’s trade and investment.

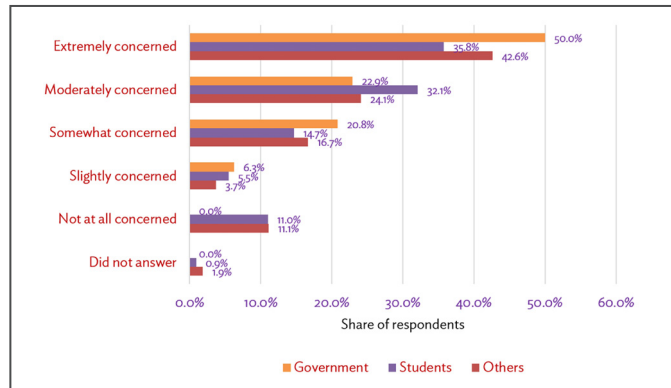
**Figure 18: Concern if Lao PDR Were to Leave ASEAN by Age**



**Figure 19: Concern if Lao PDR Were to Leave ASEAN by Gender**



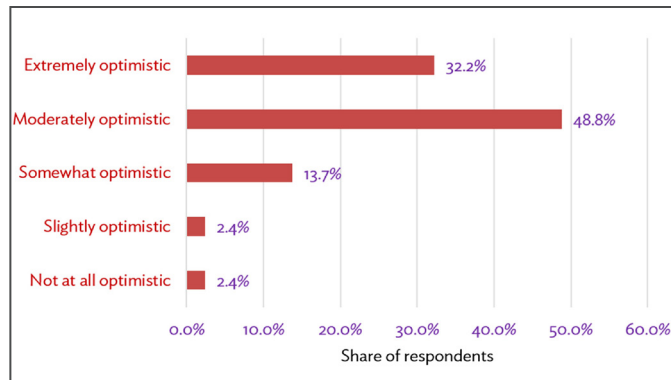
**Figure 20: Concern if Lao PDR Were to Leave ASEAN by Affiliation**



### Perception of the future of ASEAN

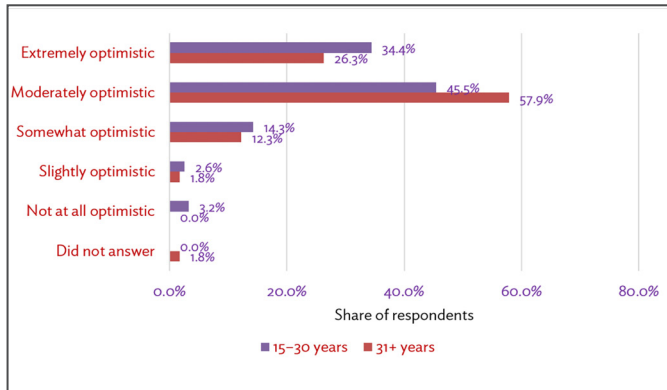
The survey asked what the respondents thought about the future of ASEAN. They were given five possible choices: ‘extremely optimistic’, ‘moderately optimistic’, ‘somewhat optimistic’, ‘slightly optimistic’, and ‘not at all optimistic’. Of the respondents, 0.5% did not answer the question (Figure 21). Overall, 48.8% of the respondents said they were moderately optimistic about the future of ASEAN, 32.2% said they felt extremely optimistic about the future of ASEAN, 13.7% felt somewhat optimistic, and 2.4% felt slightly optimistic or not at all optimistic.

**Figure 21: Perception of the Future of ASEAN**

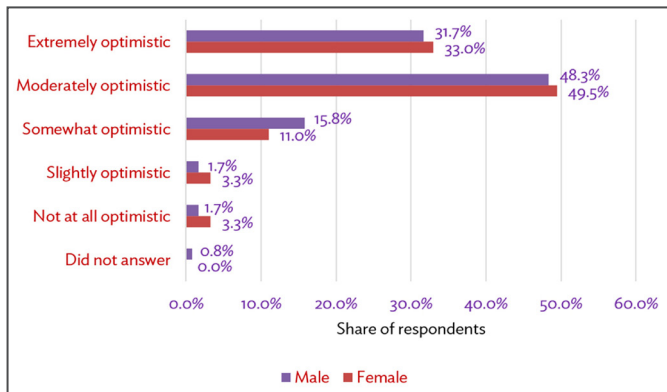


Comparing the responses of those aged 15–30 and those aged 31 or over, Figure 22 shows that overall, the largest shares in both groups were at least moderately optimistic. The figure also reveals that the respondents in the younger age group had a higher proportion of those who were extremely optimistic compared to the older age group, while the older age group had a higher share of respondents who expressed moderate optimism about the future of ASEAN.

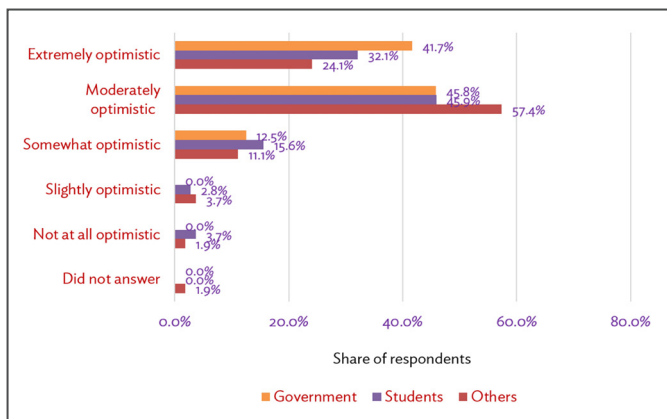
**Figure 22: Perception of the Future of ASEAN by Age**



**Figure 23: Perception of the the Future of ASEAN by Gender**



**Figure 24: Perception of the the Future of ASEAN by Affiliation**



As shown in Figure 23, the responses by the male and female respondents were similar. Shares of 31.7% of the male respondents and 33% of the female respondents were extremely optimistic about the future of ASEAN, while 48.3% of the male respondents and 49.5% of the female respondents were moderately optimistic about the future of ASEAN. Both groups had small proportions of respondents who were slightly optimistic or not at all optimistic, at 1.7% for the male respondents and 3.3% for the female respondents.

Comparison by affiliation shows that the government respondents were relatively more optimistic about the future of ASEAN than the students and other respondents. They had the largest share of respondents who answered ‘extremely optimistic’, while none chose ‘slightly optimistic’ or ‘not at all optimistic’ (Figure 24).

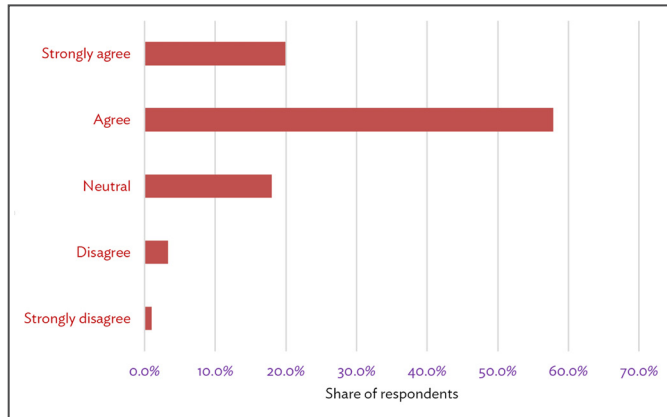
During the FGDs, participants elaborated on their perceptions of the future of ASEAN. Overall, the participants were optimistic about ASEAN’s future, although opinions varied. Some participants thought that in years to come, they would see improved global economic conditions that would help boost the regional economy. Some participants believed that establishing the ASEAN Community marked the beginning of strengthened regional cooperation and integration through implementation of the blueprints. Some participants were also considerably optimistic about the tourism sector in the region.

## **Media coverage of ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges**

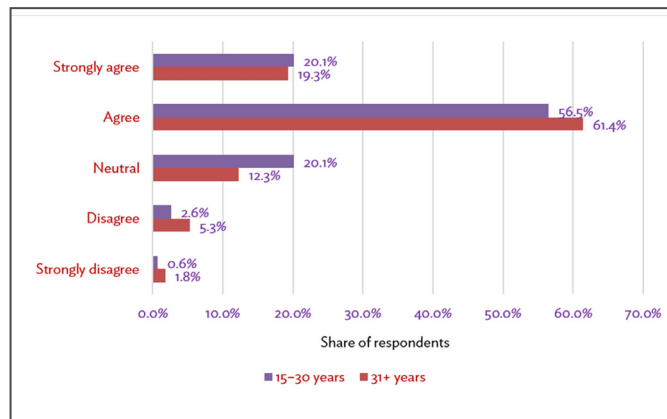
The respondents were given the following statement: ‘The media (newspaper, radio, television, and online news) does not have enough coverage of ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges.’ They were then asked to state their level of agreement with the statement by choosing one of five possible responses: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. Figure 25 shows that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement: 57.8% chose ‘agree’, and 19.9% chose ‘strongly agree’. Meanwhile, 18% of the total respondents were neutral, 3.3% disagreed, and only 0.9% strongly disagreed.

Figures 26, 27, and 28 show that the patterns of responses among groups were similar. The proportions of respondents that indicated they agreed with the statement were between 56% and 62%, and the proportions of those who strongly agreed with the statement in each group were between 16% and 26%. The shares of respondents who disagreed in all groups were less than 6.3%.

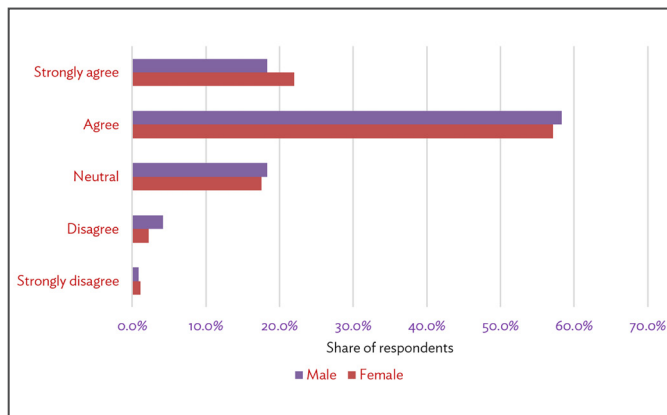
**Figure 25: Agreement that the Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges**



**Figure 26: Agreement that the Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges, by Age**

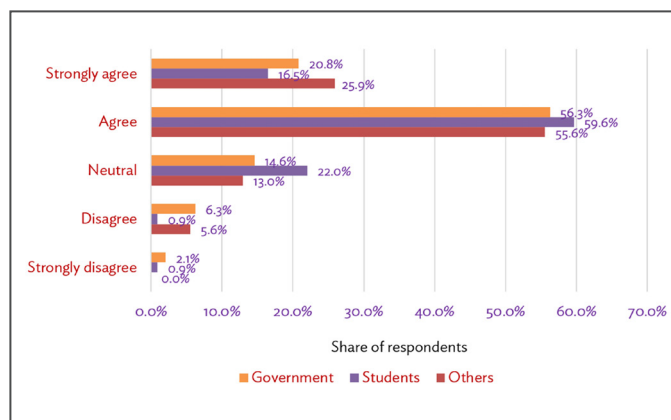


**Figure 27: Agreement that the Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges, by Gender**





**Figure 28: Agreement that the Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges, by Affiliation**



The FGDs revealed that the majority of the participants acknowledged that the media did cover topics on ASEAN. However, the participants thought that most media pieces did not provide much in-depth analysis or details on ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges. As such, most participants agreed with the statement. Moreover, some participants pointed out that they felt Lao PDR’s media had less coverage of ASEAN than the media in Thailand and that they had benefited from Thai media in learning about ASEAN.

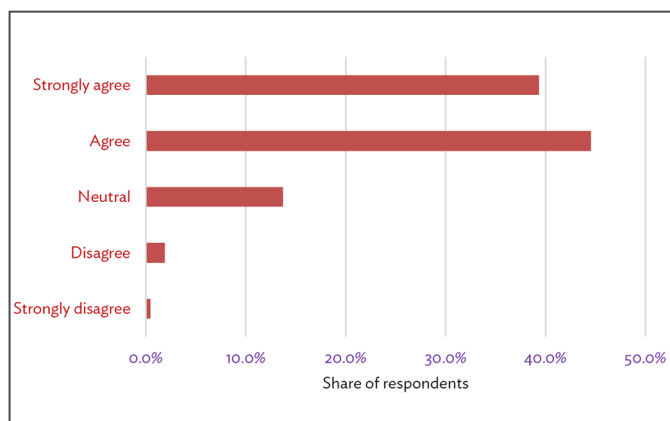
## Perception of using textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN

The survey asked respondents about the extent to which they agreed with using school textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges. The respondents were given five possible choices: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. Overall, the majority of the respondents agreed with using textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN to a certain extent. Figure 29 shows that 39.3% of the total respondents strongly agreed with using school textbooks for these purposes, and 44.5% agreed with the idea. Meanwhile, 13.7% of the respondents were neutral about the idea, and 1.9% and 0.5% of the respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea, respectively.

Figure 30 compares the responses between the two age groups. Respondents in the older age group tended to agree more with the idea of using textbooks. Of those aged 31 or older, 45.6% strongly agreed with the idea, and 47.7% agreed with the idea. Meanwhile, for the younger group, 37% indicated ‘strongly agree’, and 43.5% indicated

‘agree’. None of the respondents in the older group answered ‘neutral’ or ‘strongly disagree’, but 7% chose ‘disagree’. The figure also shows that a sizeable proportion of respondents aged 15–30, 18.8%, were neutral with the idea, and almost none disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**Figure 29: Perception of Using Textbooks to Socialise and Educate Young People about ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges**



**Figure 30: Perception of Using Textbooks to Socialise and Educate Young People about ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges, by Age**

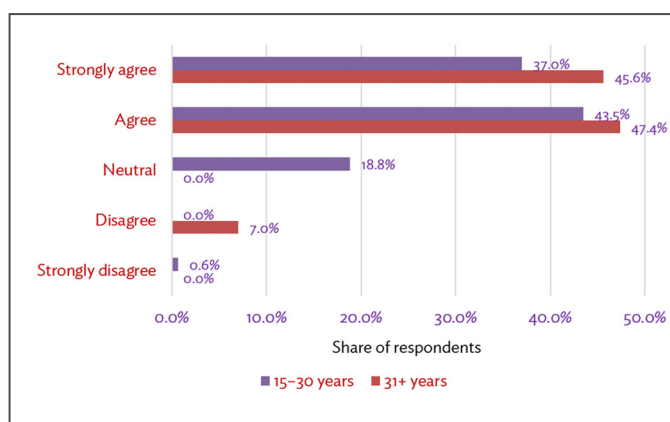
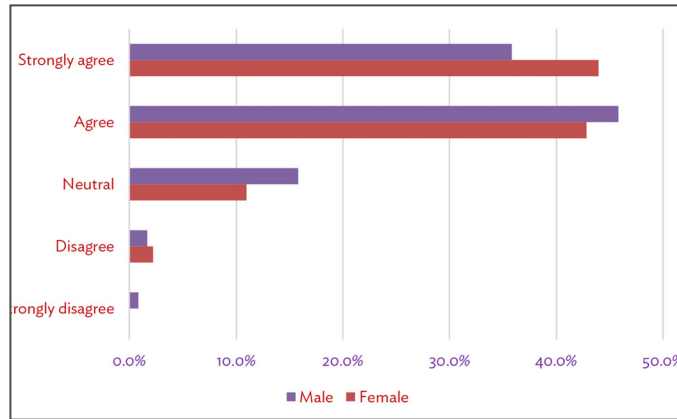


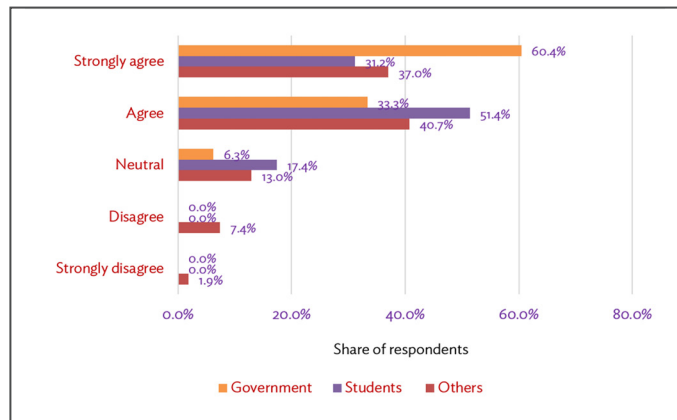
Figure 31 compares the responses of the male and female respondents. The majority of both the male and female respondents agreed or strongly agreed with using school textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN, while less than 20% indicated ‘neutral’ or ‘disagree’.

Figure 32 shows the responses by affiliation. Overall, the majority of respondents from all affiliations agreed with using school textbooks to educate young people about ASEAN. The majority of the respondents in each affiliation selected ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’, and

**Figure 31: Perception of Using Textbooks to Socialise and Educate Young People about ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges, by Gender**



**Figure 32: Perceptions of Using Textbooks to Socialise and Educate Young People about ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges, by Affiliation**



none of the government officials or students selected ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. Among the affiliation groups, the government respondents were most in agreement as 60.4% of them indicated strong agreement, and 33.3% indicated agreement with the idea.

The participants from the FGDs also agreed with using textbooks. Some participants reasoned that as ASEAN provided potential benefits for the economic development of Lao PDR, it was important for young people to have a good understanding of its progress, achievements, and challenges so they could prepare themselves for the opportunities and challenges. Some people shared their ideas that the content should include the cultural, economic, and social development of each member country so that

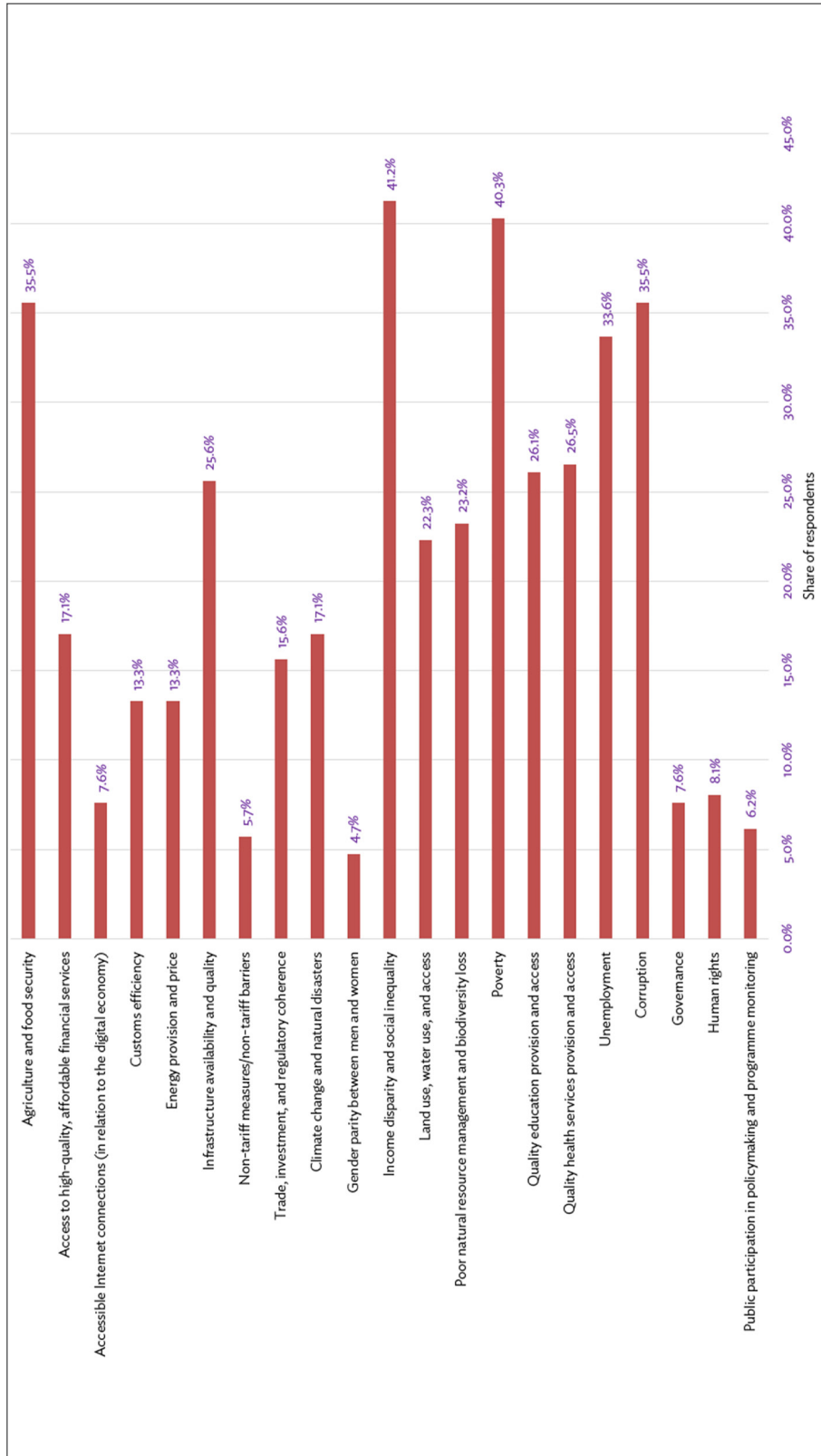
young people can learn more about ASEAN's Member States and have more of a sense of an ASEAN identity.

## **Top five pressing problems facing Lao PDR at present and until 2025**

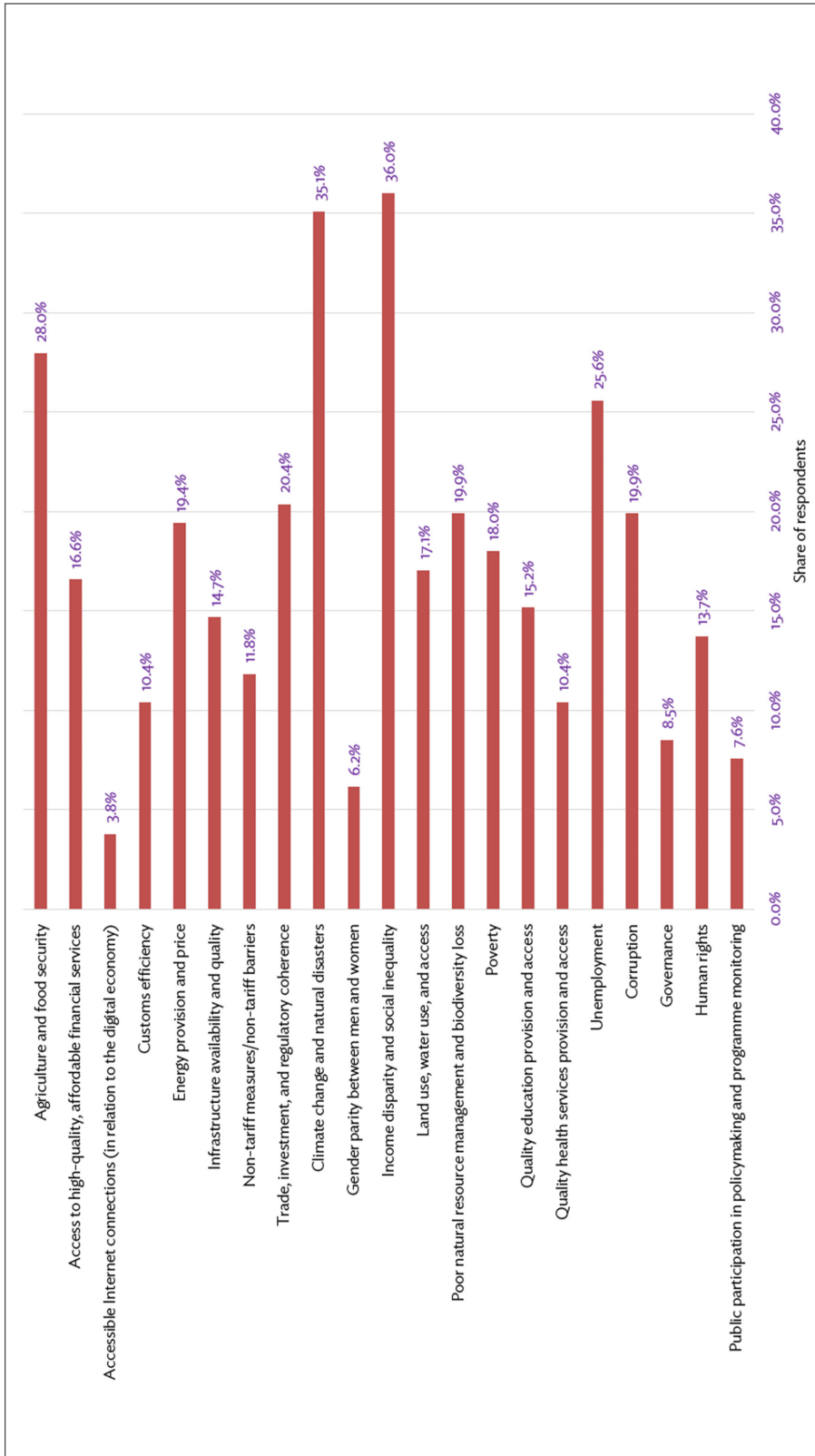
The survey asked respondents to select five issues they thought were the most pressing problems facing the country now and until 2025. The respondents were given 21 issues, of which eight were economic issues, nine were sociocultural issues, and four were governance and political issues. Figure 33 shows that income disparity and social inequality was viewed as the most pressing problem, selected by the highest proportion of respondents (41.2%). This was followed by poverty; agriculture and food security; corruption; and unemployment. Among the issues, gender disparity was the least selected, followed by issues related to non-tariff measures and public participation in policymaking and programme monitoring.

The participants in the FGDs made differing selections, and their overall results were slightly different from the results of the survey. The top five pressing problems chosen by the participants were income disparity and social inequality, unemployment, access to high-quality education, access to high-quality health services, and corruption. The majority of participants felt that economic development over the last decade had resulted in increased disparity in the country. They mentioned that in urban areas, there had been a rapid increase in the numbers of buildings, big houses, restaurants, and expensive cars. On the other hand, in rural areas, there had been limited improvement in infrastructure and facilities. Unemployment was viewed as one of the most pressing issues, especially among the student participants. Some shared how they had seen how difficult it was for their seniors to find jobs. They mentioned that job opportunities were limited despite high economic growth. Some participants complained about the low quality of health care provision in Lao PDR compared to its neighbouring countries and were also concerned about the lagging state of education. Participants also expressed their concerns about corruption but were positive about the efforts being made by the current government to fight it.

**Figure 33: Top Five Pressing Problems Facing Lao PDR at Present and until 2025**



**Figure 34: Top Five Pressing Problems Facing ASEAN at Present and until 2025**



## Top five pressing problems facing ASEAN at present and until 2025

Similar to the previous section, the respondents were asked to select the top five pressing problems facing ASEAN at present and until 2025 from among 21 possible choices. The issue of income disparity and social inequality was selected by the highest share of respondents (36%) (Figure 34). This was followed by climate change and natural disasters (selected by 35.1% of the respondents), agriculture and food security (28%), unemployment (25.6%), and corruption (19.9%). The issue of accessible Internet connections was selected by only 3.8% of the total respondents. This was followed by public participation in policymaking and programme monitoring, which was selected by 7.6% of the participants.

The results from the FGDs again differed slightly from the survey results. As in the survey results, the issues of climate change and natural disasters, income disparity and social inequality, and unemployment were selected by the majority of participants as among the top five pressing problems facing ASEAN. Land use, water use, and access, and the issue of energy provision and price were not in the list of the top five problems in the survey results but were among the top five selected by the FGD participants.

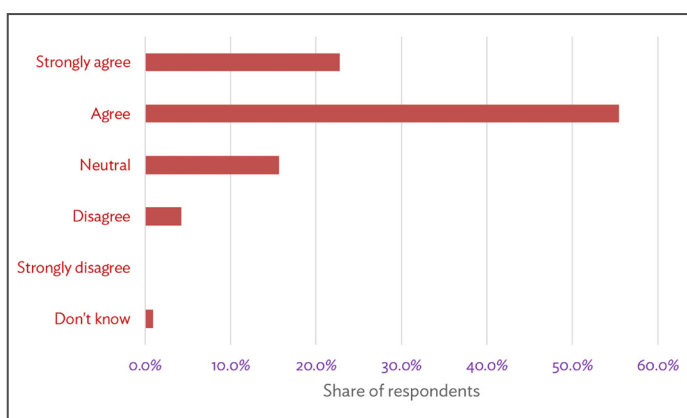
The participants explained that the issue of climate change and natural disasters was a pressing problem not only at the regional level but also at the global level. For ASEAN, the participants claimed this was a pressing issue that would require concerted efforts to address, especially as over the last few years there had been more severe, frequent occurrences of natural disasters in the region, including in Lao PDR. The issue of income disparity and social inequality was also a concern. They felt that this issue was being faced by the ASEAN Member States individually but that there was also regional disparity. They recognised the need for joint efforts to help reduce the regional disparity.

## Expectations for ASEAN by 2025

The survey provided 15 statements related to ASEAN and asked the respondents whether they agreed each statement would be likely to happen by 2025. There were six possible choices: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree', and 'don't know'. The results for each statement are as follows.

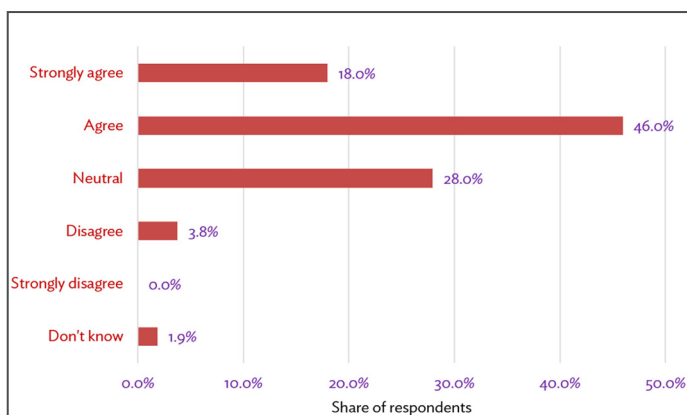
The first statement given to the respondents was: ‘ASEAN is a region where goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries in the region.’ Of the respondents, 22.7% strongly agreed with the statement, 55.5% selected ‘agree’, and 15.6% chose ‘neutral’ (Figure 35). Meanwhile, 4.3% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, none of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 0.9% indicated ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 35: ASEAN Is a Region Where Goods, Services, and Businesses Can Move Easily Among Countries in the Region**



Statement 2 was: ‘ASEAN is a region where regulations and procedures make it easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.’ Of the respondents, 46% agreed with the statement, and 18% strongly agreed (Figure 36). The share of respondents who chose ‘neutral’ was significant, at 28%. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, while only 3.8% disagreed, and 1.9% answered ‘don’t know’.

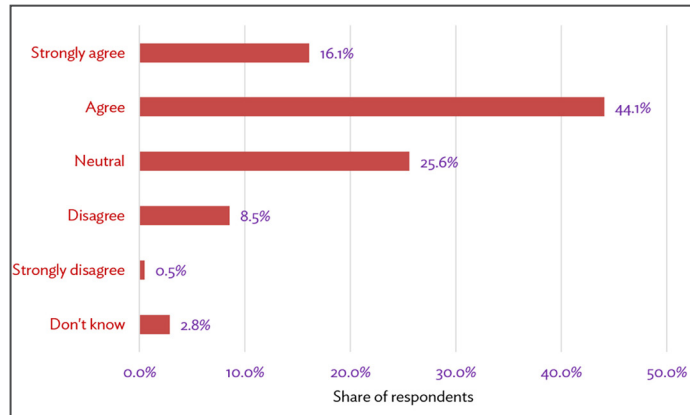
**Figure 36: ASEAN Is a Region Where Regulations and Procedures Make It Easy for Skilled Workers and Professionals to Find Work in Other Countries in ASEAN**





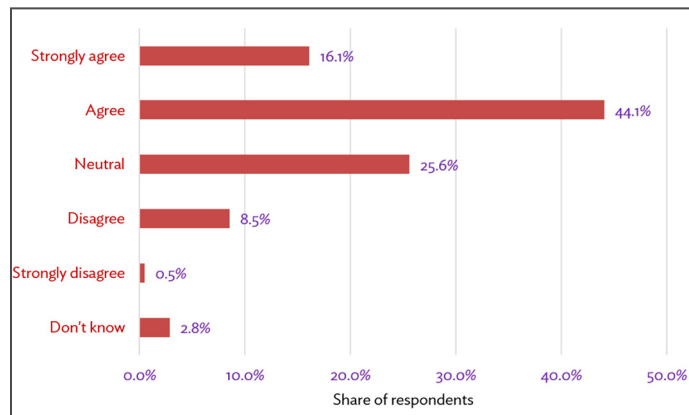
Statement 3 was: ‘ASEAN and its member countries provide basic social protection and health services to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.’ For this statement, 44.1% of the respondents agreed, 16.1% strongly agreed, and 25.6% were neutral (Figure 37). The ratio of respondents who disagreed was somewhat sizeable at 8.5%. A small share of respondents, 0.5%, strongly disagreed, and 2.8% selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 37: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Provide Basic Social Protection and Health Services to Migrant and Temporary Workers from Other Countries in ASEAN**



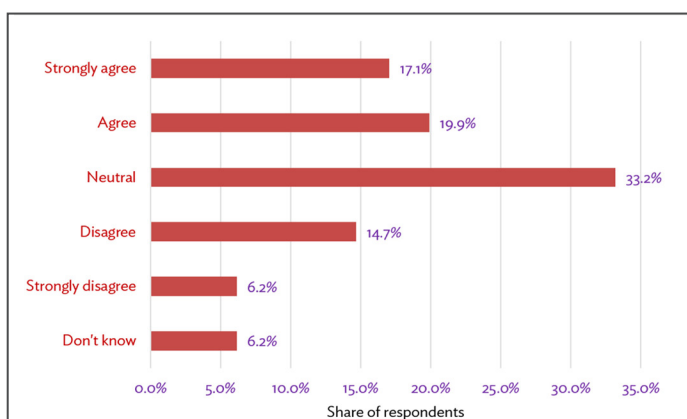
Statement 4 proposed by 2025: ‘ASEAN is a region of good governance and very much less corruption.’ Figure 38 shows that the largest share of respondents, 33.2%, were neutral about this statement. However, 17.1% strongly agreed, and 19.9% agreed. The ratios of respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed were considerable, at 14.7% and 6.2%, respectively. Meanwhile, 6.2% of respondents selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 38: ASEAN Is a Region of Good Governance and Very Much Less Corruption**



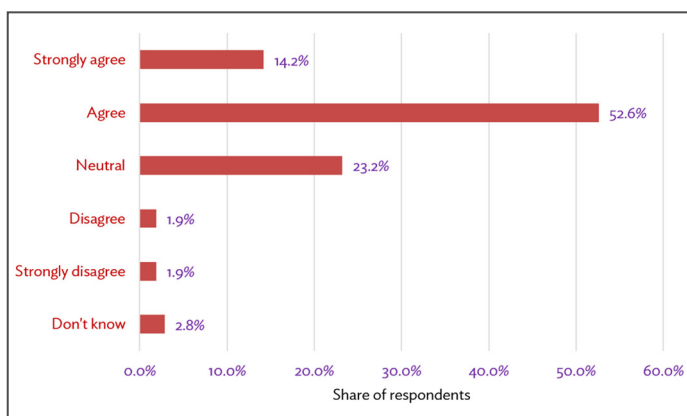
Statement 5 given to the respondents was: ‘ASEAN is a region where it is easy to physically move around through roads, railways, air, and shipping.’ Figure 39 reveals that a large share of respondents, 38.9%, agreed with the statement, and 22.7% strongly agreed. A sizeable 21.8% of the total respondents were neutral with the statement, while 9.5% disagreed, and 1.9% strongly disagreed. The remaining 2.4% indicated they did not know.

**Figure 39: ASEAN Is a Region Where It Is Easy to Physically Move around through Roads, Railways, Air, and Shipping**



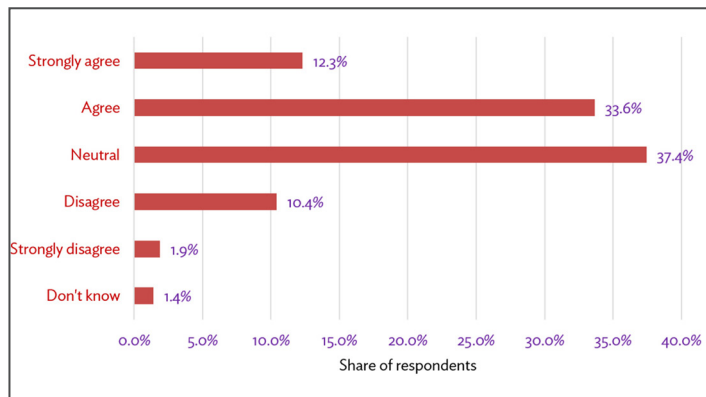
Statement 6 was: ‘The ASEAN Community is a region where people and businesses can digitally interact and communicate easily with one another.’ The majority of respondents, 52.6%, agreed with the statement, while 14.2% strongly agreed (Figure 40). A notable share of 23.2% selected ‘neutral’, while 1.9% indicated ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’. The remaining 2.8% chose ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 40: The ASEAN Community Is a Region Where People and Businesses Can Digitally Interact and Communicate Easily with One Another**



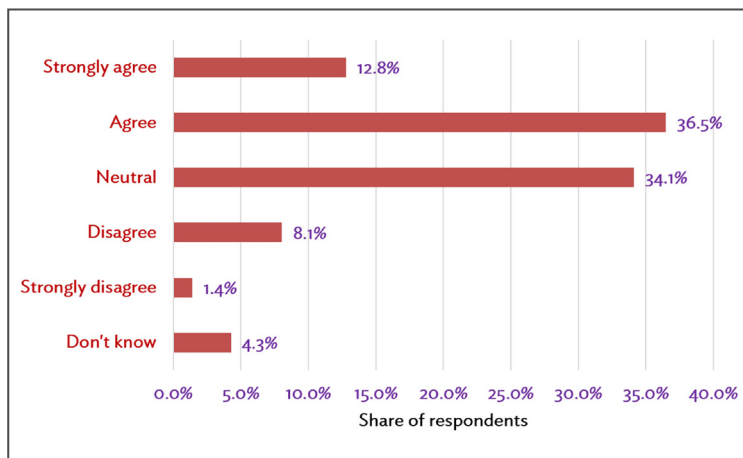
Statement 7 given to the respondents was: ‘ASEAN peoples are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.’ Interestingly, the largest proportion of respondents, 37.4%, was neutral about the statement (Figure 41). This was followed by 33.6% of respondents who selected ‘agree’ and 12.3% who selected ‘strongly agree’. Meanwhile, 10.4% of respondents chose ‘disagree’, and 1.9% chose ‘strongly disagree’. The remaining 1.4% selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 41: ASEAN Peoples Are Deeply Aware of the ASEAN Community and Its Programmes**



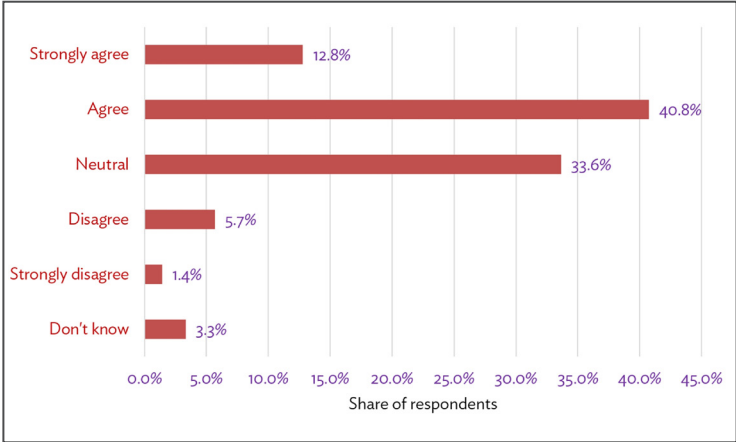
Statement 8 was: ‘The ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its people.’ Although the majority of respondents were quite positive about the statement, with 36.5% selecting ‘agree’ and 12.8% selecting ‘strongly agree’, a sizeable proportion, 34.1%, felt neutrally about the statement (Figure 42). Meanwhile, 8.1% chose ‘disagree’, 1.4% chose ‘strongly disagree’, and 4.3% answered ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 42: The ASEAN Community Deeply Engages and Benefits Its Peoples**



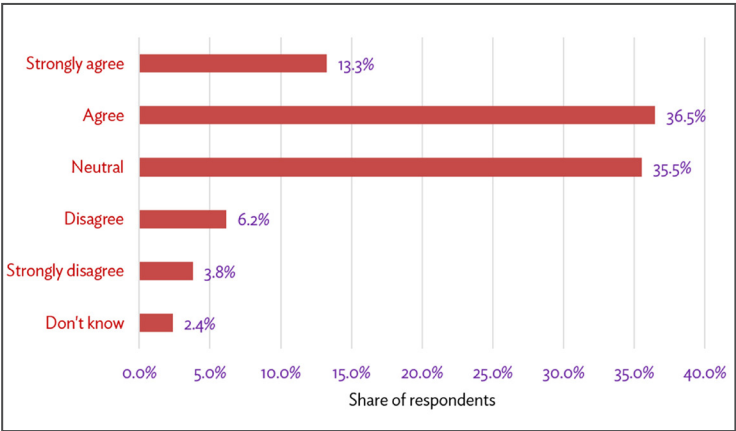
Statement 9 was: ‘ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.’ Of the respondents, 12.8% strongly disagreed with the statement, while 40.8% agreed (Figure 43). A considerable share of respondents, 33.6%, selected ‘neutral’, while 5.7% chose ‘disagree’, 1.4% chose ‘strongly disagree’, and 3.3% chose ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 43: ASEAN Pushes for Equitable Access to Opportunities for ASEAN Peoples**



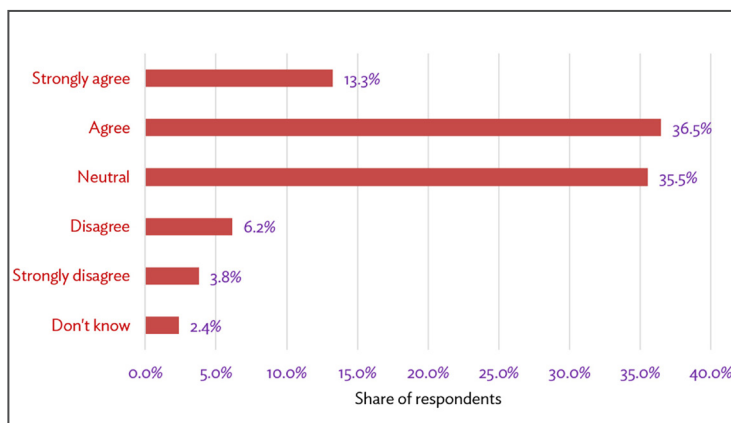
Statement 10 proposed: ‘ASEAN and its member countries effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region.’ For this statement, 36.5% of the respondents agreed and 13.3% strongly agreed (Figure 44). Meanwhile, 35.5% answered ‘neutral’, 6.2% chose ‘disagree’, 3.8% chose ‘strongly disagree’, and 2.4% chose ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 44: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Protect Human Rights and Minorities in the Region**



Statement 11 was: ‘ASEAN and its member countries effectively conserve and sustainably manage the region’s biodiversity and natural resources.’ For this statement, 42.2% of the respondents agreed, and 10% strongly agreed (Figure 45). Meanwhile, 29.4% chose ‘neutral’, 10.9% selected ‘disagree’, 1.4% selected ‘disagree’, and 3.3% selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 45: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Conserve and Sustainably Manage the Region’s Biodiversity and Natural Resources**



The next statement, Statement 12, was: ‘ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.’ Figure 46 shows that the largest proportion of the respondents (32.2%) was neutral about the statement. Meanwhile, 27.5% of the respondents said they agreed with the statement, and 11.8% indicated strong agreement. Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who indicated ‘disagree’ was quite large at 17.1%. However, the proportion of respondents who strongly disagreed was much smaller at 3.3%, and the proportion who chose ‘don’t know’ was 5.2%.

**Figure 46: ASEAN Major Cities Are Less Polluted and More Liveable than They Are Today**

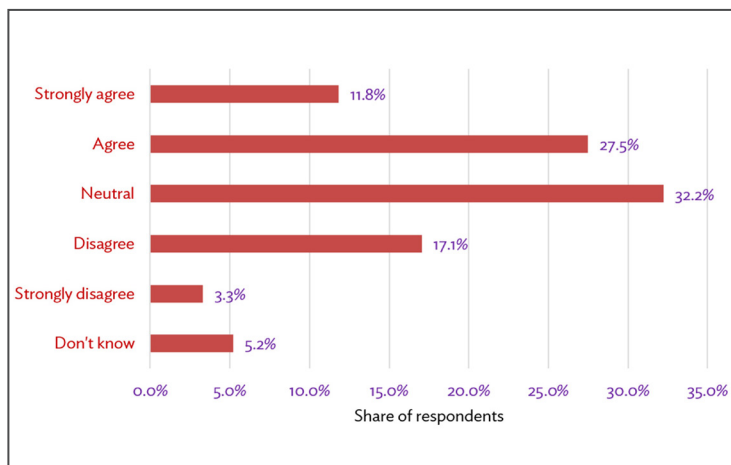
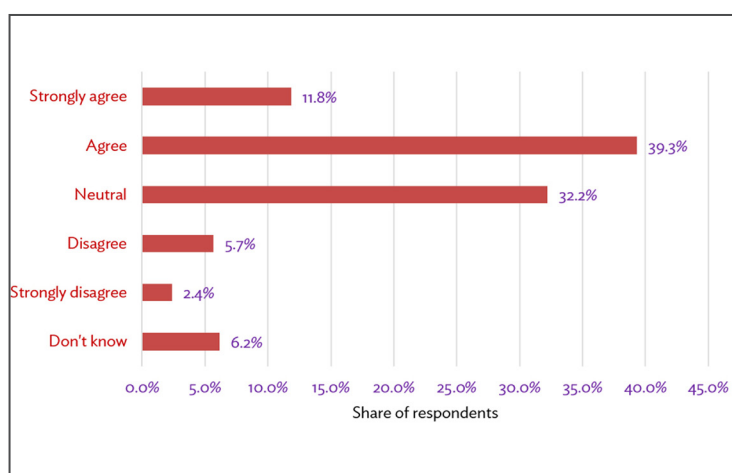


Figure 47 shows the perceptions of the respondents for Statement 13: ‘ASEAN and its member countries are very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and concertedly together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.’ The proportion of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement was 11.8%, and those who agreed accounted for 39.3%. Meanwhile, 32.2% were neutral about the statement, and 5.7% and 2.4% selected ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’, respectively. Lastly, 6.2% of respondents answered ‘don’t know’.

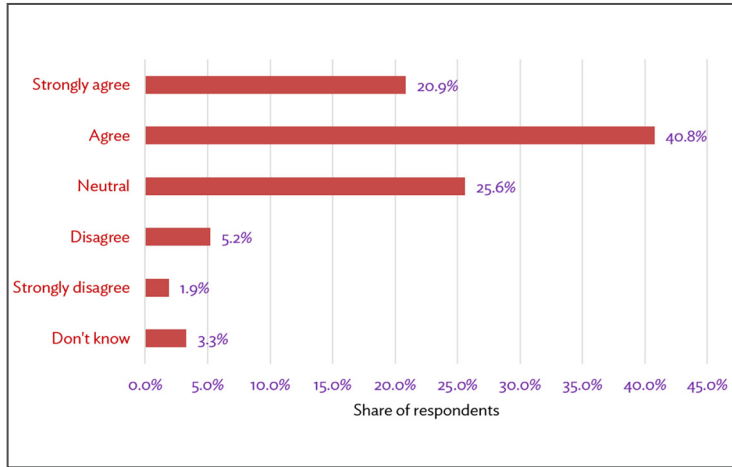
**Figure 47: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Are Very Much Able to Anticipate, Respond, and Recover Faster and Concertedly Together from Natural Disasters and Health Hazards in the Region**



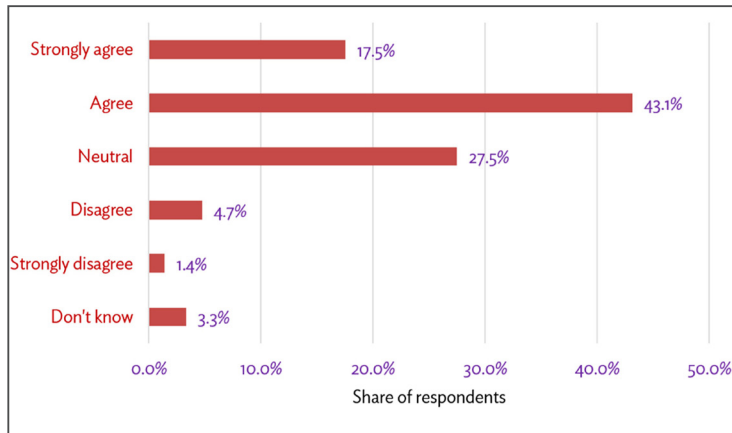
Statement 14 was: ‘ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global negotiations and forums.’ Figure 48 shows that the largest share of respondents, 40.8%, agreed with the statement, and 20.9% strongly agreed. Although 25.6% of the respondents were neutral about the statement, those who did not agree accounted for less than 10% of the total respondents: 5.2% selected ‘disagree’ and 1.9% selected ‘strongly disagree’. Lastly, 3.3% selected ‘don’t know’.

The last statement, Statement 15, proposed: ‘ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.’ Of the respondents, the largest proportion, 43.1%, agreed, and 17.5% strongly agreed (Figure 49). Over a quarter of respondents, 27.5%, were neutral about the statement. Only small shares of respondents indicated ‘don’t know’ (3.3%), ‘disagree’ (4.7%), and ‘strongly disagree’ (1.4%).

**Figure 48: ASEAN Has a Strong Voice and Is an Important Player in Global Negotiations and Forums**



**Figure 49: ASEAN Deeply Engages Powers in the Region and the World to Ensure Peace in the Region and the Asia-Pacific Region**



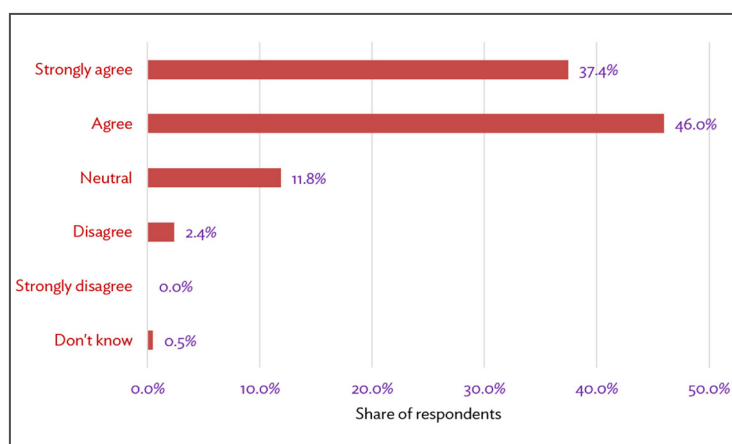
In the FGDs, the majority of the participants were generally positive about ASEAN's future. Most expected to have a free flow of goods, services, and businesses. They claimed there had been good progress in this area and that they had noticed improved integration. The issues that many participants thought would be a challenge to overcome by 2025 were pollution and natural disasters. They took Lao PDR as an example and explained that as the economy had developed, they had noticed worsening conditions in these two areas.

## Aspirations for ASEAN by 2025

The respondents were next given the same 15 statements about ASEAN. However, unlike in the previous section, the respondents were asked whether each statement was what they actually wanted to happen in ASEAN by 2025. For each statement, the respondents selected one of six possible choices: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’, and ‘don’t know’. The results are as follows.

Figure 50 shows the responses for Statement 1: ‘ASEAN is a region where goods, services, and businesses can move easily among countries in the region.’ Slightly more than 80% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement as an aspiration for ASEAN by 2025, with shares of 37.4% and 46.0%, respectively. Meanwhile, 11.8% of the respondents selected ‘neutral’, 2.4% selected ‘disagree’, and 0.5% selected ‘don’t know’. None of the respondents chose ‘strongly disagree’.

**Figure 50: ASEAN Is a Region Where Goods, Services, and Businesses Can Move Easily among Countries in the Region**

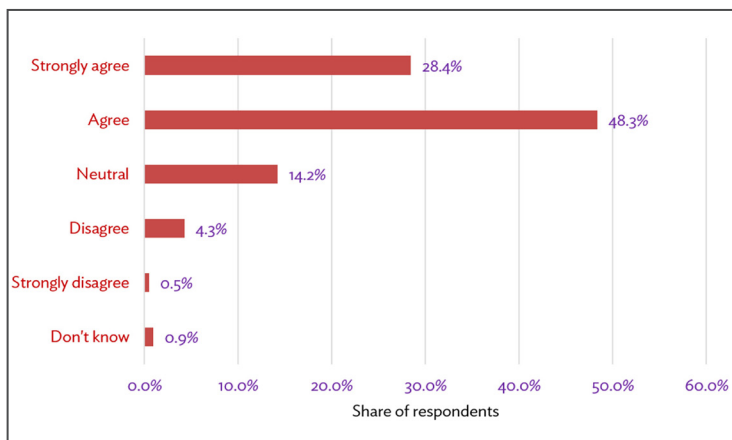


Statement 2 was: ‘ASEAN is a region where regulations and procedures make it easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.’ The ratios of respondents who indicated that the statement strongly agreed and agreed with their aspirations for ASEAN by 2025 were relatively large at 28.4% and 48.3%, respectively (Figure 51). Respondents who chose ‘neutral’ accounted for 14.2% of the respondents. Respondents who chose ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ accounted for 4.3% and 0.5%, respectively. Only 0.9% selected ‘don’t know’.

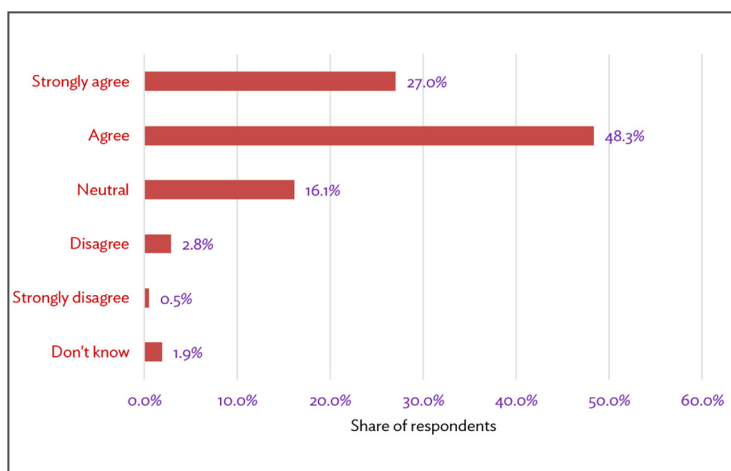
Figure 52 shows the respondents’ aspirations for Statement 3: ‘ASEAN and its member countries provide basic social protection and health services to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.’ The majority of respondents either strongly



**Figure 51: ASEAN Is a Region Where Regulations and Procedures Make It Easy for Skilled Workers and Professionals to Find Work in Other Countries in ASEAN**



**Figure 52: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Provide Basic Social Protection and Health Services to Migrant and Temporary Workers from Other Countries in ASEAN**



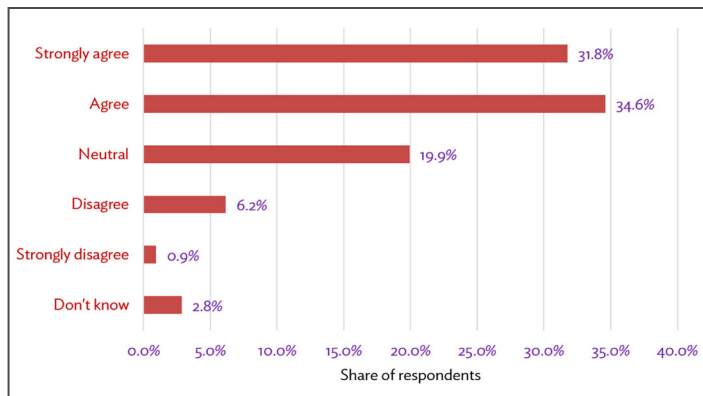
agreed or agreed with the statement, while 27% selected ‘strongly agree’, and 48.3% selected ‘agree’. Respondents who chose ‘neutral’ comprised 16.1% of the total. Meanwhile, 2.8% of the respondents selected ‘disagree’, 0.5% selected ‘strongly disagree’, and 1.9% selected ‘don’t know’.

Statement 4 was: ‘ASEAN is a region of good governance and very much less corruption.’ The largest proportion of respondents (34.6%) selected ‘agree’ (Figure 53). This was followed by 31.8% who selected ‘strongly disagree’ and 19.9% who selected ‘neutral’. Meanwhile, 6.2% chose ‘disagree’, 0.9% chose ‘agree’, and 2.8% selected ‘don’t know’.

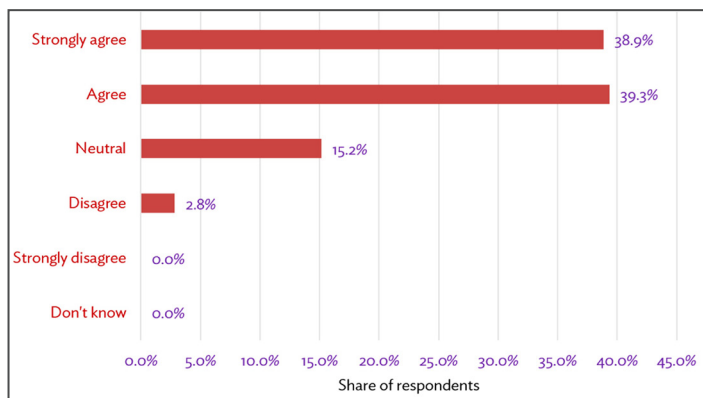
Statement 5 was: ‘ASEAN is a region where it is easy to physically move around through roads, railways, air, and shipping.’ The majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this was what they wished to happen in ASEAN by 2025, with shares of 38.9% and 39.3%, respectively (Figure 54). ‘Neutral’ was selected by 15.2% of respondents, while ‘disagree’ was selected by 2.8%. None of the respondents selected ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘don’t know’.

Figure 55 shows the responses for Statement 6: ‘The ASEAN Community is a region where people and businesses can digitally interact and communicate easily with one another.’ Significant proportions of the respondents wished for this to happen, with 48.3% selecting ‘agree’ and 31.8% selecting ‘strongly agree’. A share of 10.9% selected ‘neutral’, 2.8% selected ‘disagree’, 1.4% selected ‘strongly disagree’, and 1.4% selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 53: ASEAN Is a Region of Good Governance and Very Much Less Corruption**



**Figure 54: ASEAN Is a Region Where It Is Easy to Physically Move Around through Roads, Railways, Air, and Shipping**



**Figure 55: The ASEAN Community Is a Region Where People and Businesses Can Digitally Interact and Communicate Easily with One Another**

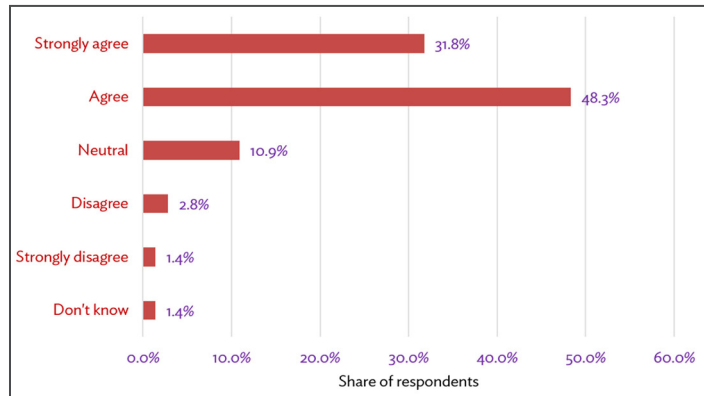


Figure 56 shows the responses for Statement 7: ‘ASEAN peoples are deeply aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.’ For this statement, 46% of the respondents agreed they wished for this to happen by 2025, while 25.6% strongly agreed. A share of 18.5% selected ‘neutral’. Respondents who selected ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’, and ‘don’t know’ accounted for 2.8%, 0.9% and 2.8% of the total respondents, respectively.

**Figure 56: ASEAN Peoples Are Deeply Aware of the ASEAN Community and Its Programmes**

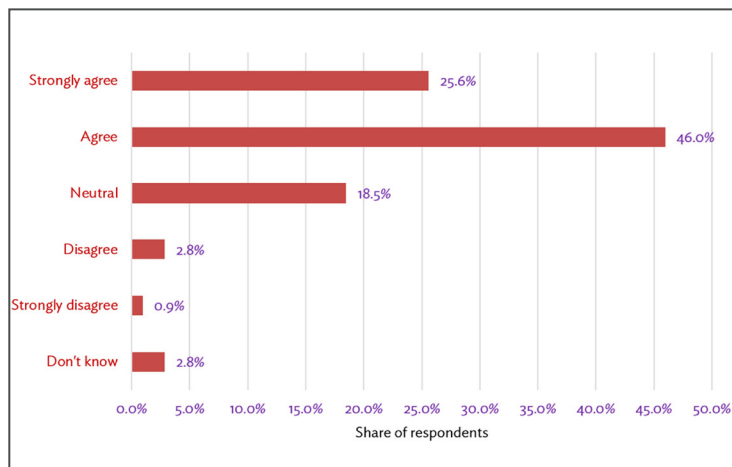
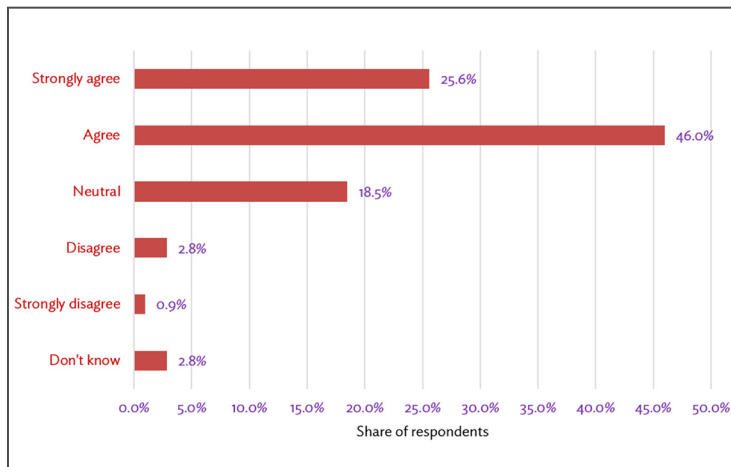


Figure 57 shows the responses for Statement 8: ‘The ASEAN Community deeply engages and benefits its peoples.’ For this statement, 30.8% of respondents selected ‘strongly agree’, 38.9% selected ‘agree’, and 21.3% selected ‘neutral’. Only a small proportion of 3.3% of the respondents selected ‘disagree’, and 0.9% selected ‘strongly disagree’. The remaining 0.9% selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 57: The ASEAN Community Deeply Engages and Benefits Its Peoples**



Statement 9 was: 'ASEAN pushes for equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.' Of the respondents, 33.6% strongly agreed with the statement, 39.8% agreed, and 17.5% selected 'neutral' (Figure 58). A small share, 3.8%, selected 'disagree', while 0.5% selected 'strongly disagree' and 0.9% selected 'don't know'.

**Figure 58: ASEAN Pushes for Equitable Access to Opportunities for ASEAN Peoples**

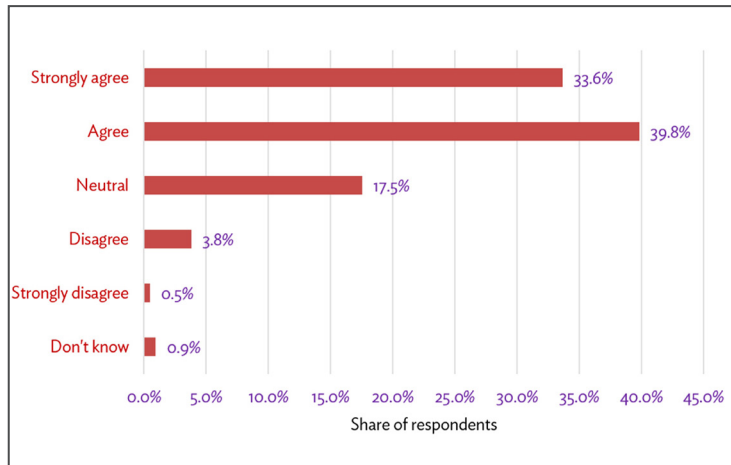
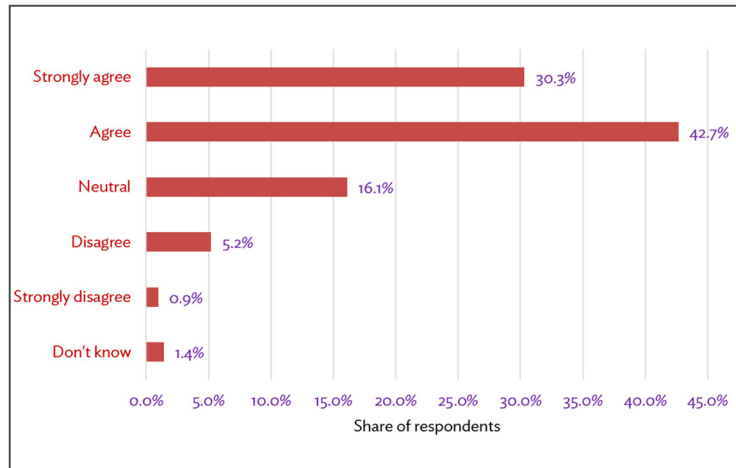


Figure 59 shows the responses for Statement 10: 'ASEAN and its member countries effectively protect human rights and minorities in the region.' A large proportion of 42.7% of the respondents selected 'agree', followed by 30.3% who selected 'strongly agree'. Meanwhile, 16.1% chose 'neutral', 5.2% selected 'disagree', 0.9% selected 'strongly disagree', and 1.4% selected 'don't know'.

**Figure 59: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Protect Human Rights and Minorities in the Region**



Statement 11 was: ‘ASEAN and its member countries effectively conserve and sustainably manage the region’s biodiversity and natural resources.’ Overall, more than 70% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the statement represented their aspirations, with shares of 30.3% and 41.2%, respectively (Figure 60). Meanwhile, 17.5% of respondents selected ‘neutral’, 5.7% selected ‘disagree’, 0.5% selected ‘strongly disagree’, and 0.9% selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 60: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Effectively Conserve and Sustainably Manage the Region’s Biodiversity and Natural Resources**

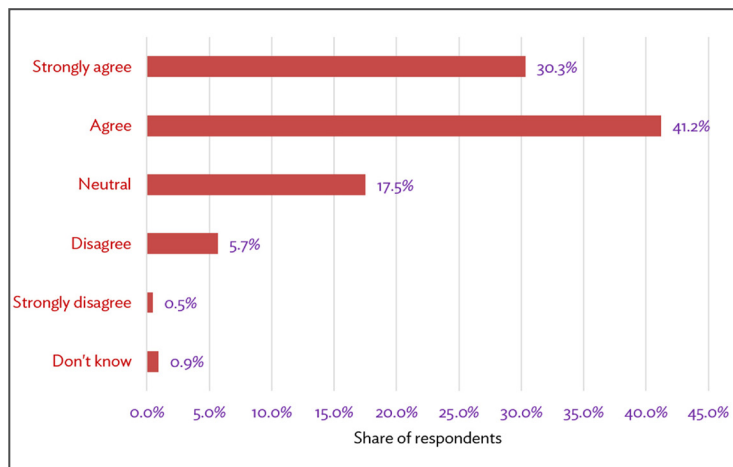
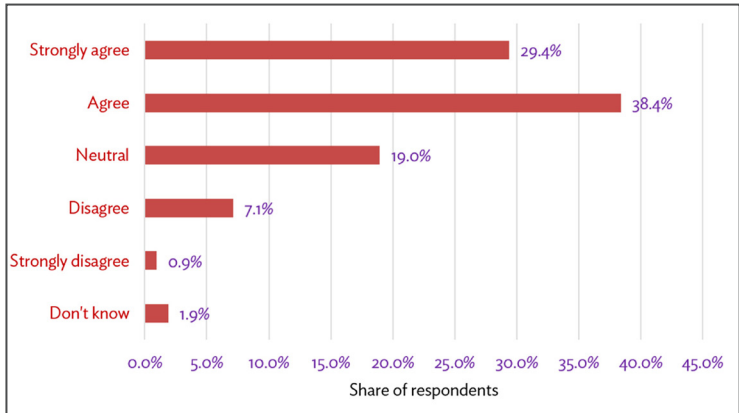


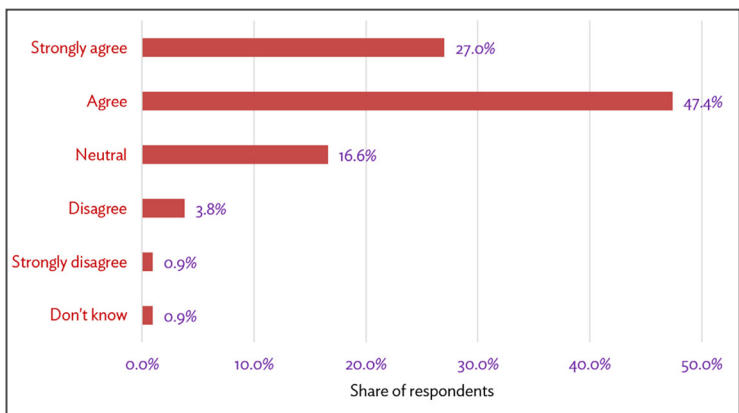
Figure 61 shows the respondents’ opinions on Statement 12: ‘ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.’ For this statement, 29.4% selected ‘strongly agree’, 38.4% selected ‘agree’, and 19% selected ‘neutral’, while 7.1% selected ‘disagree’, 0.9% selected ‘strongly disagree’, and 1.9% selected ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 61: ASEAN Major Cities Are Less Polluted and More Liveable than They Are Today**



Next, respondents were asked about Statement 13: ‘ASEAN and its member countries are very much able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster and concertedly together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.’ For this statement, 27% of respondents selected ‘strongly agree’, and as much as 47.4% selected ‘agree’ (Figure 62). Meanwhile, 16.6% indicated ‘neutral’, 3.8% selected ‘disagree’, and 0.9% selected ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘don’t know’.

**Figure 62: ASEAN and Its Member Countries Are Very Much Able to Anticipate, Respond, and Recover Faster and Concertedly Together from Natural Disasters and Health Hazards in the Region**



Statement 14 was: ‘ASEAN has a strong voice and is an important player in global negotiations and forums.’ Of the respondents, 37.9% strongly agreed and 39.3% agreed that the statement was what they wished to happen in ASEAN by 2025 (Figure 63). A

smaller proportion of respondents, 15.2%, selected 'neutral'. Those who did not agree accounted for less than 4%. Specifically, 2.8% selected 'disagree', and 0.5% selected 'strongly disagree'. For this statement, 0.9% of the respondents selected 'don't know'.

**Figure 63: ASEAN Has a Strong Voice and Is an Important Player in Global Negotiations and Forums**

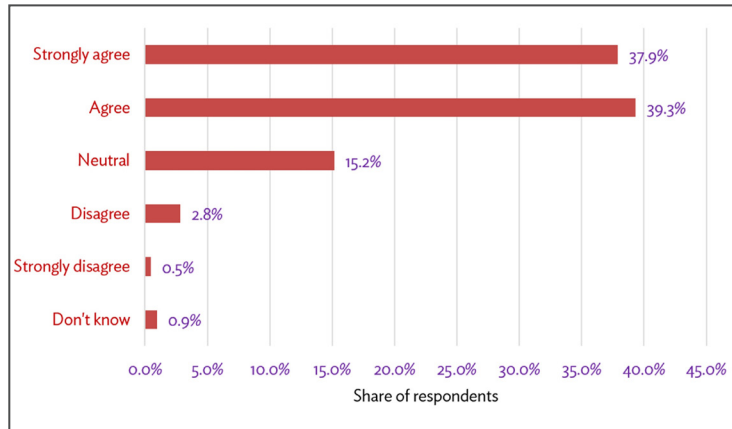
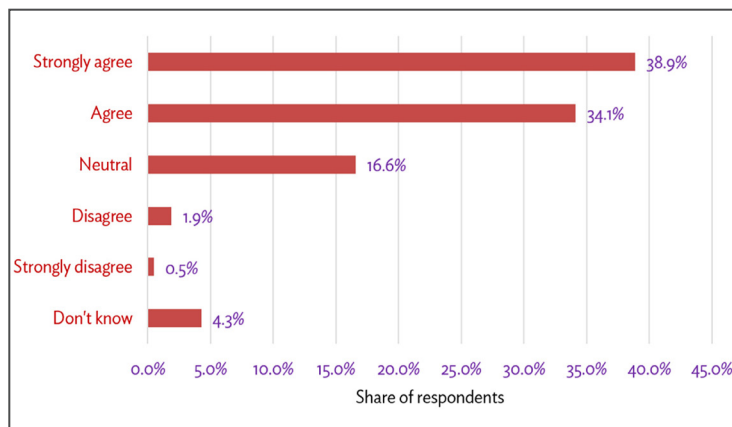


Figure 64 shows the responses for the final statement, Statement 15: 'ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.' When asked whether the statement was what they wished to happen in ASEAN by 2025, the largest proportion of the respondents, 38.9%, indicated 'strongly agree', and 34.1% selected 'agree'. Meanwhile, 16.6% of the respondents selected 'neutral', 1.9% selected 'disagree', 0.5% selected 'strongly disagree', and 4.3% selected 'don't know'.

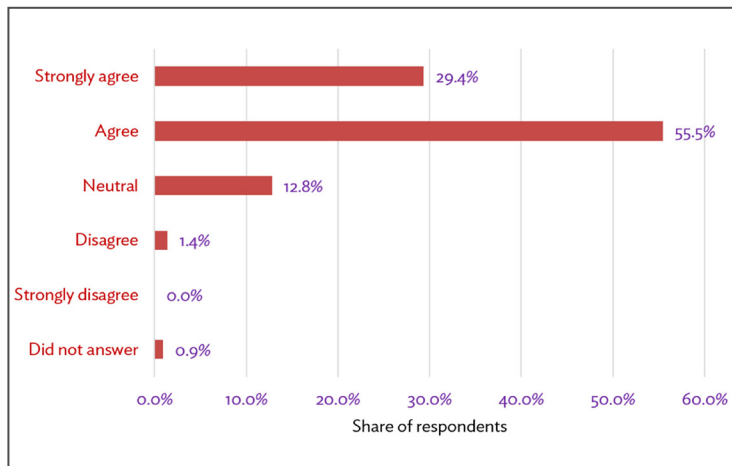
**Figure 64: ASEAN Deeply Engages Powers in the Region and the World to Ensure Peace in the Region and the Asia-Pacific Region**



## Perceptions on upgrading the implementing and monitoring capacities of the ASEAN Secretariat

The survey next asked the respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the idea of gradually upgrading the implementing and monitoring capacities of the ASEAN Secretariat to meet its increasing challenges. The respondents had five choices: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. Figure 65 shows that more than half of the total respondents, 55.5%, agreed with the idea, and 29.4% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, a small proportion of the respondents (12.8%) were neutral about the idea, and 1.4% did not agree with it. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. The remaining 0.9% did not answer the question.

**Figure 65: Perceptions on Upgrading the Implementing and Monitoring Capacities of the ASEAN Secretariat**



Overall, the participants in the FGDs agreed with the idea. Some of the government participants explained that over time, ASEAN had set more ambitious goals, and the areas of ASEAN cooperation and integration had expanded and become more complicated. Therefore, in general, they agreed that the ASEAN Secretariat’s implementing and monitoring capacities needed to be upgraded.