



**ASEAN SOGIE
CAUCUS**

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
2019 Annual Report

**2019
ANNUAL
REPORT**

VISION

An ASEAN Community that respects the human rights of all people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

MISSION

ASC is a regional network dynamically engaging diverse actors to collectively advocate for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer people, and gender-diverse persons in Southeast Asia.

GOALS

ASC works towards the following goals:

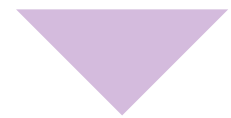
- All human rights mechanisms impacting the ASEAN region adopt and implement frameworks and plans of actions that promote and protect the rights of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons.
- Domestic laws, policies, and programs in Southeast Asian countries include the protection and promotion of the rights of LGBTIQ and gender-diverse persons.
- LGBTIQ and gender-diverse civil society are empowered to engage state and non-state actors to adhere to human rights standards.

ABOUT ASC

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) is a network of human rights activists from Southeast Asia that works for the inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) into the human rights work in ASEAN. Advocating for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all persons regardless of SOGIESC in Southeast Asia is the heart of ASC's mission.

Our roots go back to the courageous action of activists from eight (8) ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam), who were inspired by the inclusion of SOGIESC into the final statement of the 2010 ASEAN Civil Society Conference / ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF). With this recognition of LGBTIQ human rights as integral by regional civil society, our founders envisioned a strong and proactive push from LGBTIQ activists across ASEAN.

In 2011, ASC was formally established in a meeting organized by Arus Pelangi, Indonesia for Humans, and ISEE during the 2011 ACSC/APF in Jakarta, Indonesia. Then in 2014, ASC began setting up its Secretariat in Quezon City, Philippines, obtaining legal registration as a non-stock, non-profit organization the following year. Since then, we have pushed for LGBTIQ human rights through engagements in civil society platforms and human rights mechanisms; supported local LGBTIQ activists through mentorship, technical assistance, and relationship-building; and reimagined activism as a creative process anchored on a vision of South-South solidarity.



Looking back, I am overwhelmed with pride for how far we have come. In May 2011, LGBT focused NGOs invited us to gather in Jakarta for the ASEAN Civil Society Conference /ASEAN People's Forum, and a group of ragtag activists responded to the call. We did not receive a formal invitation from the conference organizers, nor were we cushioned by a palette of financiers who believed in LGBT rights. We were poor but rich in spirit. Little did we know that this was just the beginning of our fight to bring LGBT rights to the forefront in ASEAN.

There were times when the journey was painful and heart breaking. I have witnessed how civil society groups and governments discriminated against and excluded us. We learned very early on that many viewed the support for LGBT rights as 'costly' in a highly conservative region filled with authoritarian tendencies. Erasing our humanity was a matter of expediency. And yet, this has never deterred us.

In the 8 years since we started, the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus has confronted these challenges with poise and grit. With its hardworking secretariat, the organization has gone above and beyond to turn the dream of freedom for LGBT persons in ASEAN into a reality. Together with grassroots LGBT activists across the region, we have attained incredible achievements and visibility. Our loose network of LGBT activists has grown into a powerful advocacy body that can no longer be ignored.

In this 2019 annual report, the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus showcases the amazing work it has achieved; from its relentless engagement with ASEAN human rights mechanisms; mainstreaming LGBT intersectionality into the ASEAN civil society communities work; creating lifelines to grassroots activism with its programs and support; and finally applying a reflexive feminist lens to its membership and organizational capacity to sustain itself for years to come.

Throughout it all, we were driven by our belief in the vision of a people-oriented ASEAN and that LGBT rights are human rights. At its heart, the caucus is a consistent voice of conscience for all LGBT persons in ASEAN. And it will continue to inform supporters or not alike that, We Are ASEAN too.



Jean Chong

Chairperson of Board of Trustees
2019 - 2022



Time flies and it has been four years since the ASC held its members meeting in 2016. And it has been eight years since the ASC organized the first (ever) LGBTIQ+ focused workshop at the ASEAN People's Forum at Jakarta in 2011.

As for us, ASEAN as a region also continues to grow. Nowadays, we can enjoy facilities that were not available several years ago. We no longer need visas to enter each other's countries, and flights are more affordable. We can even use the same online taxi app in each other's countries, and we can easily spot ASEAN nationals travelling, studying, living, and working in each other's countries.

Regionalism is unavoidable. ASEAN too is advancing its development by making it more accessible for its people. However, the fundamental question remains: where are the LGBTIQ+ people amongst all of this development and economic growth? Why do many of us continue to face oppression for being ourselves in our ASEAN homes? Why were two of our Gay friends publicly canned in Aceh? Why did a friend in Myanmar commit suicide from bullying? Why were twelve of our Transwomen friends arrested, humiliated and had their hair cut in public? Why? For just being themselves? That is unacceptable!

Despite all the challenges, we continue to make a lot of breakthroughs bringing LGBTIQ+ narratives on various ASEAN tables. This report marked a crucial milestone for the ASC in advancing LGBTIQ+ rights and inclusion in ASEAN. This report symbolises the result of commitment, consistencies and tireless efforts of ASC's staff, board and members, particularly the Secretariat who care for the ASC on a daily basis.

Finally, the ASC started as a fluid network of LGBTIQ+ activists in ASEAN who believe in the importance of collaboration as a regional community to assure the fulfilment and protection of our human rights. Regional solidarity is the spirit of the ASC. Regional solidarity is the spirit of this legacy.

Anna Arifin

Chairperson of Board of Trustees
2015 – 2019



Advocating LGBTIQ Rights: Regional & International



“

In large parts of my region, ASEAN, we still lack proper protection against violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. As our regional human rights frameworks, such as the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, are omitting the protection against discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, human rights violations against are not being addressed. We still witness to date criminalization, imposition of capital punishment and degrading treatment towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

”

Statement of ASEAN SOGIE Caucus and COC Nederlands during the 41st Regular Session Human Rights Council

In early 2019, the government of Brunei Darussalam announced the full enforcement of the Syariah Penal Code Order 2013, including its penalties of death, stoning, and imprisonment for LGBTIQ persons. The law also imposed restrictions on freedom of expression, religion, and women's sexuality and bodily integrity. ASC led the mobilization of civil society organizations to campaign for the non-implementation of the Syariah Penal Code in Brunei, first by leading the Joint CSO Statement of Solidarity which was signed by 140 organizations from Southeast and East Asia. This statement was translated into Thai and Vietnamese and was shared widely on both social media and public actions, such as the demonstration by Thai activists at the Brunei Darussalam Embassy in Bangkok. We also co-authored a joint submission to the AICHR regarding the serious human rights implications of the Shariah Penal Code, written together with the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Forum Asia, and the Southeast Asia Press Alliance (SEAPA). We also made urgent communications to the UN Independent Expert on SOGI (IESOGI) regarding the situation.

We believe our interventions contributed to regional and national campaigns pushing to halt the law's implementation, including through communications of UN Special Procedures to the Government of Brunei and calls for the repeal anti-LGBTIQ criminal laws were also made during the country's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Following this, the Sultan of Brunei announced a moratorium on the death penalty.

The same year, we joined an advocacy mission to the UN Human Rights Council to ensure the passage of the resolution to extend the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on the Violence and Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (IESOGI).

This was done in collaboration with several groups, including ILGA World, COC Netherlands and International Service for Human Rights. During the advocacy mission, ASC conducted meetings with permanent missions of various countries, and read a Joint Statement by ASC and COC Netherlands during the 30th Meeting of the UN Human Rights Council's 41st Regular Session. While in Geneva, we also mobilized local LGBTIQ activists and other stakeholders to urge the Philippine Government (the only ASEAN country voting at the time) to support IESOGI resolution. This includes lobbying members of Congress and an online petition which generated more than 300 signatures. An opinion piece titled "Rainbow glitters after the storm: The UN HR Council Resolution on SOGI" was also written. The Philippines voted in favor of the IESOGI.

ASC also engaged in SOGIESC issues during the EU-ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue held in Brussels, Belgium last November 27, 2019. We raised issues on the need to enact legislation against all forms of discrimination, support the economic empowerment of LGBTIQ persons, generate LGBTIQ-inclusive data to inform public policy, and strengthen protection measures against reprisals and violence towards LGBTIQ human rights defenders. These are also reflected in the document "EU-Southeast Asia CSOs Submission to the EU-ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2019".





**South-South
Solidarity:
Connecting Grassroots to
Global and Regional Spaces**

“

I believe ASC is integral to the larger work towards equality as a community. As activists, we might be and/or feel like we are isolated by our struggles, but as a collective effort, we find solidarity and affirmation from those who go where needs to be travelled and inevitably ruptured. I would like to see more regional workshops organised by ASC in collaboration with various national stakeholders and community groups. I see the potential for a giving circle managed by a committee so that more voices and initiatives are unearthed.

”

Cally Cheung, PROUT, Singapore

Our work with grassroots communities and peoples' organizations are ASC's core and foundation. Fostering relationships and enriching one-another's potentials is ASC's guiding ethos. And it is only with such relationships, anchored on trust and confidence, that we can envision a truly regional LGBTIQ movement. This is why ASC commits much of its limited resources to advocates on the ground, where these resources have the most potential for advancing human rights where it truly matters.

Since 2015, our support was channelled mostly towards small, unregistered, and community-focused LGBTIQ groups -- those at the very frontlines of advocacy. Acutely aware of the serious geographic and socioeconomic disparities in access to funding and capacity-building opportunities, ASC will continue to mobilize resources and prioritize LGBTIQ communities outside urban centers and mainstream advocacy networks.

In 2019, ASC successfully conducted several trainings with LGBTIQ activists (co-developing many of these with them) on strategic issues, including Southeast Asian queer leadership, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and regional and international human rights mechanisms. These activities built on our alliances with broader human rights movements and national and regional institutions, fostering critical thinking and the exchanges of ideas and experiences among activists.

Beyond top-down training models, we designed these activities as spaces for transformation. ASC supported ten (10) local initiatives of LGBTIQ organizations in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. In addition to financial support, we provided technical assistance and offered advice on the project's contents and strategies, methodology, referrals to resource persons, and on ensuring accountability through strong fund management and clear measures of project goals.

“

Over the past 4 years, in a time when many LGBT organisations and human rights agencies in the Philippines were afraid or adamant to talk about LGBT and Islam altogether as a human rights issue, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus has stood up, not just as an ally but a strong supporter of my activism in Mindanao. My line of activism has not been easy, but it became bearable knowing that you have people believing in you and the advocacy you are fighting for. From my Building Bridges Mindanao-wide seminars, to the OUTSpoken Web Show, producing two of my LGBT-focused short films up to holding paralegal assistance and training for the gender marginalized groups in conflict areas, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus was there assisting behind me. And when I was attacked by fundamentalist groups and threatened my safety and life, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus was one of the leading organisations who gave assistance when I was exiled from my own town. They never failed to make me feel valued when my night was the darkest, they have treated me not as an activist but as a human being in need of their strength so I may continue to fight for the rights of the gender marginalized groups in Mindanao. They once told me that there is strength in activism, but there is more when I am alive.

Rhadem Musawah, Independent Filmmaker, Philippines

”





“ 2019 witnessed increasing state and non-state sponsored harassment against LGBTIQ communities in South East Asia. ASC's leadership and meaningful collaboration with human rights organization, including FORUM-ASIA are instrumental in strengthening LGBTIQ movement building to advocate for justice and human rights. Throughout last year, I was impressed with ASC strategic direction setting, humility and inclusiveness in implementing ASEAN people's forum; lobbying for ASEAN HR mechanism term of reference review to increase protection mandates; as well as responses to national repression against SOGIESC. FORUM-ASIA is committed to maintaining collaboration with ASC in the upcoming years.

”

Rachel Arinii Judhistari, East Asia and ASEAN Advocacy Programme Manager, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Queering Civil Society and Social Justice Movements in the Region

Meaningful allyship, maintained by strong and consistent mutual reinforcement of each-other's work, is the key to mainstreaming LGBTIQ human rights and awareness of SOGIESC issues within civil society and broader human rights and social justice movements. ASC continued to work together with more than ten (10) mainstream human rights, women's rights, and child rights groups through joint statements or communications to governments, ASEAN and UN mechanisms, co-organizing workshops or learning sessions, and in shaping a regional civil society agenda.

ASC remains an active actor in organizing the annual ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC). In 2019, ACSC/APF took place in Bangkok, Thailand. Together with TEA Group, ASC organized a full-day pre-meeting to help local activists understand the ASEAN mechanisms and to level off on issues faced in the region. The said pre-meeting was attended by 15 activists and by 2 Thai parliamentarians.

During the actual ACSC/APF, ASC co-organized a session on shrinking civil society spaces and the rise of extremism. The resulting document of the 2019 in ASEAN. The session carried the title, "Rising

Populism and 'Othering' in ASEAN: Protecting rights and freedoms of ethnic-religious and LGBTIQ+ communities". It was jointly organized with Forum Asia, Initiatives for International Dialogue, GPAC and APCOM.

ACSC/APF carried recommendations to ASEAN governments urging them to affirm the civil and human rights of LGBTIQ persons in accordance with international human rights standards.

ASC continues to work within and beyond LGBTIQ movements. Taking seriously our principles of intersectionality, ASC works together with comrades across sectors, from women's rights and child rights groups to pro-democracy movements and trade unions. Such collaboration enables ASC to articulate LGBTIQ issues within the broader discourses of human rights, feminism, and sustainable development. In support of the ongoing push for more humane and ecologically-sound economic systems, whether labor and employment or environmental protection, we will continue seeking out pathways to include LGBTIQ communities into these agendas as active participants in the fulfillment of these aspirations for a just world.

THE YEAR 2019 IN FIGURES

8

Regional convenings organized focusing on the following themes: leadership, child rights and SOGIESC, LBQ womxn activism, democratization, and on human rights mechanisms. All were done collaboratively with fellow civil society organizations.

550

Individuals from 11 Southeast Asian countries we have reached through our local and regional convenings, learning sessions and workshops.

10

Local initiatives of LGBTIQ organizations supported. These initiatives were led by groups from Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

23,700

Average reach for every Facebook posting

44

Number of on-line media agencies that cited or covered ASC's analysis, opinions, or statements.

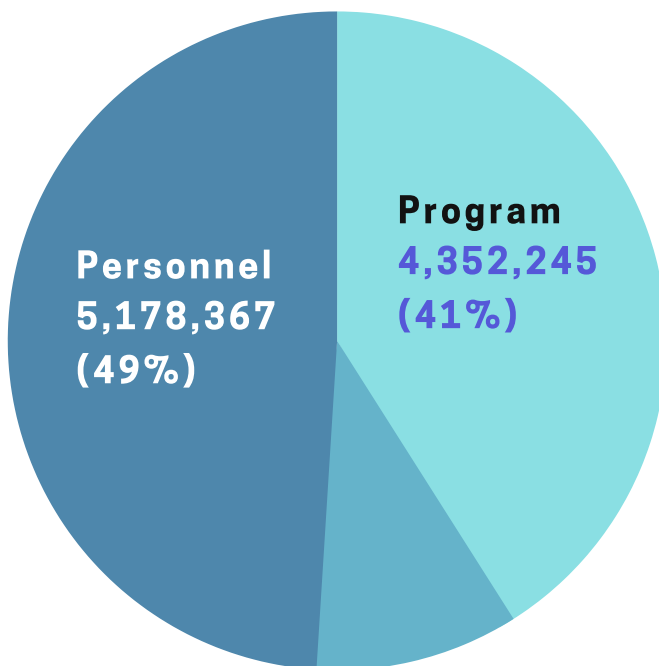
31,400

Amount in USD we fundraised collaboratively with local LGBTIQ organizations to support their own local initiatives. ASC provided technical support to local LGBTIQ groups in the area of resource mobilization.

FINANCIAL REPORT

for the year 2019

RECEIPTS	In Philippine peso
Grants	18,786,971
Interest Income	12,977
Total Receipts	18,799,948



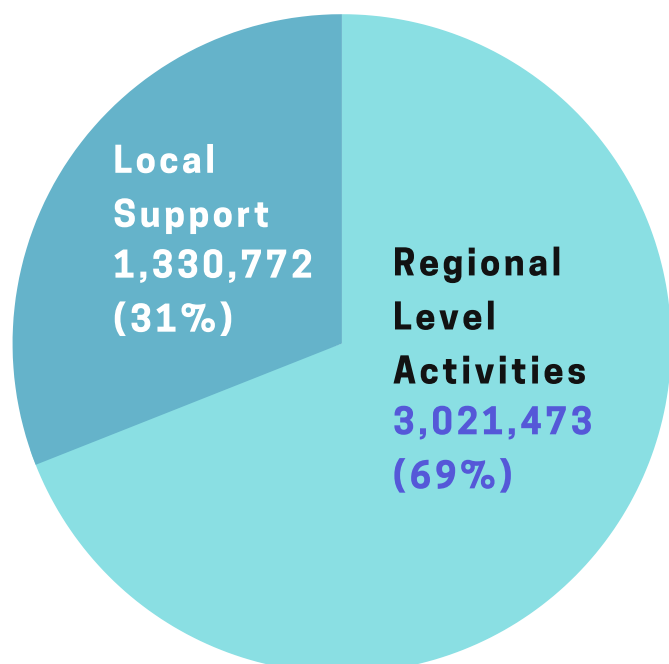
Total expenses:

10,617,256
(100%)

Administrative
1,086,644 (10%)

Total program
expenses:

4,352,245
(100%)



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2016 - 2019

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Yuli Rustinawati
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Member

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2016 - 2019

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Ging Cristobal
Philippines

Yuli Rustinawati
Indonesia

Kong Yara
Cambodia

Thilaga Sulathireh
Malaysia



Ging Cristobal
Philippines

Nicky Castillo
Philippines

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Vien Tanjung
Indonesia

Anna Arifin
Indonesia

REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

2019 - 2022

SECRETARIAT

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Regional Coordinator

Nguyen Hai Yen
Program Manager

Jan Gabriel Castaneda
Program Associate

Lini Zurlia
Advocacy and Comms Officer

Patricia Alvares
Comms Team

Juliet de Guzman
Administrative Officer

Belinda Mirasol
Finance Officer

ASC MEMBERS

ASC is a membership organization composed of individual human rights defenders as well as LGBTIQ-focused organizations. We have members from eight (8) countries in the Southeast Asian region.

Our organizational members are as follows:

- Arus Pelangi
- CamASEAN Youth's Future
- Colors Rainbow
- Ilo-ilo Pride Team
- Indonesia for Humans
- Institute for Studies of Society, Economics and Environment (iSEE)
- Justice for Sisters
- Micro Rainbow International
- OutRight Action International
- Sayoni
- Seksualiti Merdeka
- Togetherness for Equality and Action (TEA) Group

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASC's collaborative way of working was made possible with the support the following partner organizations or institutions:

- 6+
- ACD Tay Ninh
- AICHR Indonesia
- ALTSEAN Burma
- APCOM
- Arco Iris Timor Leste
- ARROW
- Asia Democracy Network
- Beyond Borders Malaysia
- Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines
- COC Netherlands
- DeGenderration Confederation
- DNP - Working Group for LGBT+ Rights at Dong Nai Province
- ERMC - Equal Rights for Minority Communities
- Far Eastern University
- FORUM Asia
- FTM Vietnam Organization
- Hanoi Queer
- Hoa Thi - The Asterisk
- Human Rights Space
- ILGA Asia
- ILGA World
- Illuminates of the Spectra
- Initiatives for International Dialogue
- Inside Out House
- International Commission of Jurists
- Intersex Asia
- IT'S T TIME
- LEA
- Lighthouse Social Enterprise
- LGBT Psychology Group of the Psychological Association of the Philippines
- LumiQueer
- MUJER LGBT Inc.
- NextGEN Hanoi
- Nuyeunu.vn
- NYNA - Nu Yeu Nu Association
- NYNO - Nam Yeu Nam Organization
- Outspoken Philippines
- Panggung Minoritas
- PFLAG Viet Nam
- Philippine LGBT Chamber of Commerce
- Prout Singapore
- Rainbow Six
- Sai Gon Queer
- Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Development Project
- SEAWatch
- Side B Philippines
- Simply, I am GAY
- Sisterhood
- The LGBT Community of Tay Ninh Province
- The LGBT Community of Thai Binh Province
- TNP - Working Group for Human Rights at Tay Ninh Province
- UniGEN
- Urgent Action Fund for Women - Asia Pacific
- W.A.Y. Up!
- Women and Gender Institute, Miriam College
- Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau
- Women Fund Asia
- YChange

We thank our funders for their continuous trust and confidence towards ASC:

- Arcus Foundation
- Open Society Foundation
- GiveOut
- Save the Children
- Swedish Federation For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights (RFSL)
- UNDP
- Being LGBT in Asia Program
- VOICE

SUPPORT US AND TAKE PART IN OUR WORK



SUPPORT QUEER ADVOCACY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Your donation will go a long way in supporting our mission. Together, let's strengthen LGBTIQ activism in Southeast Asia.

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