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SUPPORTING ASEAN'S PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN



Photo credit: Sara Lehman

Within ASEAN, as in most parts of the world, women and children are disproportionately affected by extreme poverty, illicit trade, poor health, and limited opportunities for quality education and safe employment. To promote the protection of the rights of women and children, ASEAN established the ASEAN Commission to Promote and Protect the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) in April, 2010 as an intergovernmental commission, comprised of two representatives per member state, one for women and one for children. The ACWC is responsible for promoting adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), both of which have been ratified by all ten ASEAN member states.

The United States Government, through the ASEAN-U.S. Partnership for Good Governance, Equitable and Sustainable Development and Security (PROGRESS) project works to help strengthen the institutional capacity of the ACWC and supports its mandate to improve ASEAN Member States' ability to promote and protect the rights of women and children through the following initiatives:

Strengthen ACWC as an institution – Already in September 2014, PROGRESS brought together experts from the Inter-American Commission of Women and the Children's Aid Society School in New York for an institutional strengthening workshop to help ACWC identify key priorities and needs to strengthen their institutional structure. PROGRESS will continue to support ACWC to develop a plan of action to address priorities and needs, some of which were already identified in the institutional strengthening workshop.

Establish the Network of Social Service Agencies (NOSSA) – PROGRESS has already begun to lay the foundation for the establishment of a network of social service agencies throughout the region, hiring consultants to conduct on-the-ground research and to hold consultations to identify and bring together organizations already providing protection to women and children victims of violence. Eventually, this network will also organize awareness raising campaigns about the rights of women and children.

Harmonize AMS approaches to addressing violence against women and children – PROGRESS will conduct a gap analysis to identify where gaps exist between ASEAN Member States and the minimum institutional standards established under the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN (EVAWEVAC). Once identified, plans to address the gaps will be developed through continued support to ACWC.

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