CHAPTER III
CLUSTERIZATION OF ASEAN MEASURES IN BUILDING ASEAN IDENTITY

In understanding what ASEAN Identity is, some scholars might argue that it is politically constructed to serve political means of the member state of ASEAN. Most of us also might be skeptical about the possibility to idealize what it called as shared values and norms in Southeast Asia. Even Professor Amitav Acharya believe that *"Southeast Asia's identity, which is the basis of the identity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a regional organisation, is socially and political constructed, through interactions amongst its governments and societies."* (Acharya, The Evolution and Limitations of ASEAN Identity, 2017).

And indeed, it is true that how many hard all the scholars tried to show that there are reasons that this identity is relevant due to geographical facts; sharing historical; political and social feature and came from the same ancestor, but still what is the main ingredient for an ASEAN Identity to established is the interaction between these communities. This interaction could be something natural like for example interaction between community living in borders where they exposed to other Southeast Asian or maybe in the city where people are doing international business or interaction that politically constructed like ASEAN Games, or ASEAN Summit.

However, as an organization that initiated the establishment of ASEAN Identity, ASEAN itself must become the vital actor on realization it. Besides, there are still many other actors such as the government that also hold an essential role in building the ASEAN Identity, but the leading actor of this initiation is still ASEAN Secretariat. Moreover, it is true that the framework for the realization of such identity contained in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 (2016). Inside the Blueprint, the section of Characteristic and

Elements of ASCC Blueprint 2025 focus on the effort to engages and benefits the people by focusing on *"on multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagements, including Dialogue and Development Partners, sub-regional organisations, academia, local governments in provinces, townships, municipalities and cities, private-public partnerships, community engagement, tripartite engagement with the labour sector, social enterprises, government organisation, non-governmental organisation, civil society organisation (GO-NGO/CSO) engagement, corporate social responsibility (CSR), inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue, with emphasis on raising and sustaining awareness and caring societies of ASEAN, as well as deepening the sense of ASEAN identity."* (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). In the strategic measures, the focus group of the ASEAN Identity building and development of ASEAN awareness are government officials, students, children, youths and all stakeholders as part of building ASEAN identity.

Thus, to describe how far the ASEAN Secretariat has reached the target audience for the ASEAN Identity building, The researcher would like to provide an explanation based on the Strategic Segmentation cluster of the measures taken to build ASEAN Identity which is: Children cluster, Youth cluster, and Adult cluster and general governance level as additional.

A. Child cluster.

Children always become the critical part of every development no matter how oppressive the government pays attention to them. In the research done by ASEAN Studies Center UGM about the rights of education for Children living with HIV/AIDS, explain that in the context of development studies, a community in the next generation will always be fulfilled by children that live with us now. Thus, the development that has been initiated by the previous generation

will be the responsibility of Children to continue. Children also believed could bring just and better community only by their existence in the development (Prabandari, et al., 2017). That means involving children in the current development process would ensure the sustainability of the development itself.

There are several aspects of this issue that becomes the obstacles for children to take apart in the development. Children usually marginalized when it comes to the decision-making process due to several reasons such as adult ignorance towards children aspiration, lack of space to express the demands of children, the common stigma that believe that a child still did not understand problems. If the children could be involved in the decision making it could lead us towards new knowledge base on the children, and people experience that in the end could enhance the services that provided for them. In another side, it is also our deficiency as an adult in knowing how to involve children in the process of establishing development. Aileen Ashford from Children's Protection Society describe that children participation is not merely asking for their perspective on some issues or merely an idea, but more towards the effort to listen them, understanding their aspiration and taking them seriously with the realization of their ideas and suggestion as the follow up (Commissioner for Children Tasmania, 2015). With this interpretation of children's involvement, aspects of supporting their involvement should be developed in advance.

The ASEAN Children's Forum is the basis for children across Southeast Asia to accommodate child's aspiration, as well as to deliver their messages towards the leaders of ASEAN. Held every two years since its beginning in the Philippines, the event has been successful to become the forum for children to share different knowledge as well as the forum where they could tell children's problem from each country.

This year, the 5th ASEAN Children's Forum focusing on the key four aspects: Peace; Respect for all, Care for the environment and Healthy Lifestyle. Held in Brunei Darussalam

from six[th] - to 8th August, each of ASEAN member state sends three children age 12-18 with two adult mentors to become the representative of each country. The dialogue in the plenary session is themed with children based problems which this year they are talking about: Cybersecurity and Delinquency, respect for all including people with different abilities, senior citizens and racial and cultural diversity; environmental care; and a healthy lifestyle regarding physical and mental health. With this forum, Children is not only active in the discussion regarding current issues they found in the community but also, they contribute towards the decision-making process.

However, for the most important thing is that the interaction of ASEAN Children is not vague for the establishment of ASEAN Identity. With ASEAN Children's Forum, Children could gather together and feel the sense of belonging with a discussion about the problems that they are facing. The mutual cooperation of Southeast Asian as the core principle of ASEAN Identity also could be seen on this forum. Furthermore, ASEAN honestly tried to make the engagement between communities becomes more rigid in the researcher perspective.

Other products for Children regarding ASEAN Identity building is the ASEAN Curriculum sourcebook. Answering the demand to develop children's involvement in the development process, Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) that represented by ASEAN Secretariat with other organization namely South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) alongside with ASEAN member states in 2012 formulated The ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook. Launched in Yogyakarta during the 1st EAS Senior Official Meeting on Education, minister of education across ASEAN welcome the first manifestation of ASEAN education in the form of teaching source.

With the funding provided by USAID, this guidebook provided for teaching staff across ASEAN countries to teach

related matters about ASEAN. The sourcebook also covers the five theme such as:

1. knowing ASEAN (e.g., structure, membership, purpose, accomplishments and future challenges)
2. valuing identity and diversity
3. connecting global and local
4. promoting equity and justice
5. working together for a sustainable future. (ASEAN , 2012)

These five points expected to not only provide new knowledge for the student but also increasing their awareness.

Children community in school tends to focus on the development of individual capability. With sets of curriculum and class ranking system, the pursuit of a good score is well established in order to increase their capability on basic knowledge. Such competition is needed to train them to be able to compete in the future. However, such treatment also could lead them towards the never-ending race that it is not healthy for their development. Children should also provide with the knowledge that invites them to collaborate with their community. They also need to understand about tolerance, diversity, equity and the other principle that will guide them on how to interact within the community surround them side by side to bond them with the sense of belonging of children across Southeast Asia which they interconnected with each other through the framework of ASEAN Identity. With this core five themes, it is evident that ASEAN Curriculum also provides a normative guideline through a curriculum sourcebook.

B. Youth Cluster

Youth are the shifting cluster between Child cluster and Adult cluster. In the definition provided by the UN stated that *"The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth,'*

as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States." (UN, 2013). Of course, the definition of Youth is not only limited to the statistical purposes. However, we could agree that there are many interpretations towards the definition of Youth. In this thesis, what we believe as Youth are a part of our community that is in a transition phase from childhood to adulthood. The most significant characteristic of Youth is that regarding social, they start to expose with critical problems to match with their ability of thinking. Thus, the different way of thinking could be seen by children and youth.
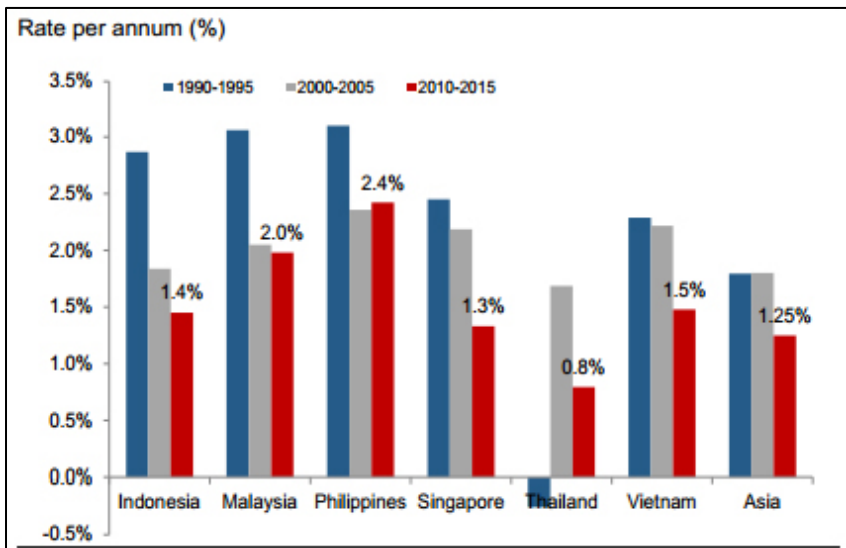

Figure 3.1: Labor Force Growth
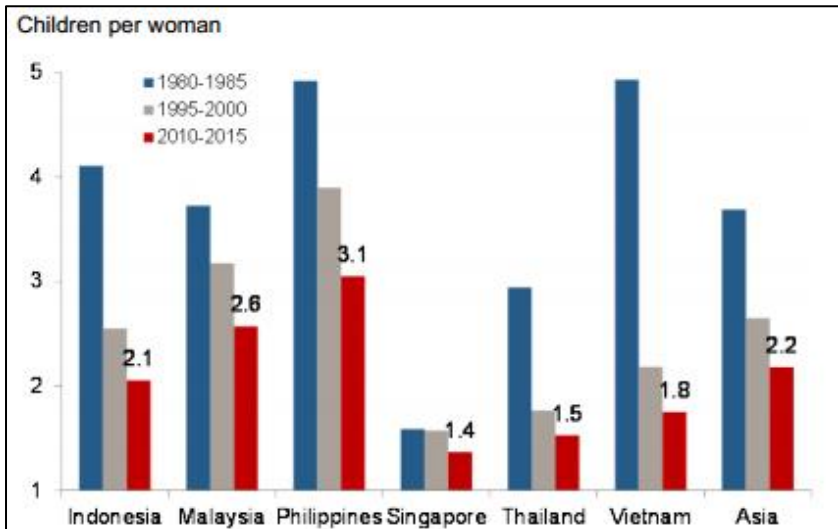Source : *(Dezan Shira & Associates, 2013)*

Figure 3.2: Total Fertility Rate
Source : *(Dezan Shira & Associates, 2013)*

Youth in ASEAN associated with the chief factor of the development. From a data that could be seen from the ASEAN Briefing provided by Dezan Shira & Associates (2013) showed that Southeast Asian working-age population that counts Youth inside this group would account for 68 percent of total population in ASEAN by 2025 compared to 60 percent in 1990. The condition occurred because of the population growth of ASEAN quite stable at 1 percent each year and increased up to 2 percent from 1950 to 1990. The implication for this is stable development and population dividend where the youth that starts to contribute to the workforce of the region.

However, without proper identity building, in the researcher analysis Youth will tend to be too competitive, and yet it could cause unhealthy competition in the region. As the world will go borderless, communities will start to interact with each other. The movement of youth to find a job inside ASEAN will soon become an everyday situation, unlike today. Thus, if

the ASEAN did not come up with better identity building for the youth, a social problem that came up within the interaction between youth could not be avoided.

ASEAN Youth Forum is a civil society based forum is a framework for the youth of ASEAN to discuss problems on a daily basis faced by the youth. According to article compiled by Stefan Rother (2015), AYF establishment in 2009 are driven by the ASEAN Youth Movement that concentrates on the issues from a particular country such as Cambodia where 40% of its population is under 20 years old. *"Using a definition of youth that includes those up to 35 years of age, the AYF claims to represent the interests of the about 60 percent of the ASEAN population falling into this age group. Providing space for young people to voice their concerns is thus considered an important step toward a more participatory ASEAN."* (Rother, 2015)

The youth also keep pushing the boundary between what is normal and what is taboo to be discussed by establishing a discussion on the topic like democracy, good governance, anti-land grabbing, anti-trafficking, anti-corruption, the situation of sex workers, and strong support for the rights of LGBTIQ in reference to their Myanmar meeting in 2014. This initiative is what makes this cluster different from the other cluster whereas the political suppression was against their topic discussion for instance. It is the nature of youth that always passionate towards change and idealism that is good to provide a suitable current for development itself.

From this forum, the feeling of belonging and ASEAN brotherhood could be seen by several initiatives they tried to discuss. On their Yangon Declaration for instance, even though that Rohingya's issue is not explicitly listed in the declaration, but the representative of the first Muslim Youth forum distribute their written statement and demand for multiculturalism, Muslim women rights to be recognized as well as interfaith dialogue. Via this forum, youth could finally

contribute towards the decision making of their rights and aspirations.

In another case from Indonesian ASEAN Youth Forum also shows its solidarity towards the youth of ASEAN. In the interface session of ASEAN Youth Forum that came up with proposals for ASEAN Internship and Youth entrepreneurship initiative, the Indonesian delegation Ardhana Pragota obtain the opportunity for the occasion to hand over a letter to Mr. Joko Widodo the President of Indonesia about the AYF stance in solidarity of fellow Philippine national Mary Jane Veloso for drug smuggling in Indonesia. Many of her supporters believe that she was tricked and became the victim of trafficking. In the analysis provided by Stefan Rother (2015), there was a big debate on the postponed of the execution of Mary Jane Veloso cause that split the conversation either it was the government initiative or national and regional civil society advocacy talking to the president. However, generally speaking, despite the truth behind the postpone, ASEAN Youth Forum clearly shows that the sense of belonging and solidarity between the youth of ASEAN especially in sensitive cases are still could be proven, and such initiative on building common identity is the best decision to ensuring the future of this association.

C. Adult Cluster

Finally, above all the young generation domination in many programs and initiative of the ASEAN measures to establish the ASEAN Identity, Adult cluster is also should be exposed with the idea of a shared sense of belonging as ASEAN.

As the older generation in the community, the adults hold quite an essential role in the establishment of the identity. Not to mention that the adult generation is the current generation that still holds political power and retains some

position in the decision-making institution, The adult community is also important due to its close relationship with the general improvement of understanding ASEAN Identity. So the type of approach that has been conducted by ASEAN in order to develop ASEAN Identity is related to the implementation of consultations (*musyawarah*) and consensus (*mufakat*). Thus programs such as forum, seminars, and training are the type of program in which the adults could interact with each other.

In reference to the paper Xiaoping Tang and Shanshan Yang (2010) on their article "An Exploration of Cross-border Continuing Adult Training in Southeast Asia", after the establishment of ASEAN Free Trade Area, there are essential cluster of adult that needs to have training such as adult from the fields of foreign affairs, science and technology, culture and education as well as diplomats, teachers and small numbers of technical persons. Indeed, that most of the cooperation that pushes the adults to interact with each other mostly in economic and development sector rather than only focus in the ASEAN Identity. However, such interaction in that Amitav Acharya noted as the interaction to build an identity in ASEAN.

However, from the review that has been done by the writer in accordance to the exclusive program to build ASEAN identity for the adult cluster, we could conclude that there is no specific program rather than to focus on the regional development in general. Michael Jones in his article talking about ASEAN Identity, stated that "Another lesson is that regardless of the availability and quality of public and private goods, it is the strength in skills, knowledge, and health of the local populations and the recognition of a country's diversity and inclusiveness that drives a nation towards sustainable development." (Jones M. E., 2004). Thus, we could conclude that the vital program to be provided in order to build the ASEAN Identity is an education in the form of capacity

building, knowledge management that become the fundament steps in achieving ASEAN Identity.

D. Regional Government.

In order to develop a true regional identity that could make ordinary people in ASEAN identify themselves as a regional entity requires more grater interaction as well as identification at the popular level beside the three clusters that has been discussed. ASEAN has done quite a good job regarding the realization of regional interactions as noted by Amitav (2017) in his article. Besides ASEAN Games that become a popular Olympic program in ASEAN, there were 52 entities under the category of ASEAN Accredited Civil Society organization that affiliated with ASEAN Secretariat to do work that relevant to the establishment of ASEAN Socio-Cultural community. Those organizations objective is for ASEAN to approach the community more fashionably rather than discussing political matters. The example for those organization are:

- Air Asia Foundation
- ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisation (ACWO)
- ASEAN Fisheries Federation (AFF)
- ASEAN Music Industry Association (AMIA)
- ASEAN Ports Association (APA)
- Southeast Asia School Principals Forum (SEASPF)
- Veterans Confederation of ASEAN Countries (VECONAC)
- ASEAN Cosmetics Association (ACA)
- ASEAN Vegetable Oils Club (AVOC)

(Acharya, 2017)

Other efforts of the ASEAN Secretariat in order to develop its identity is by conducting several events to promote ASEAN. Namely ASEAN Peoples' Congress, ASEAN Arts Festival, ASEAN Travel Agents Association. With all of this organization, the ASEAN Secretariat is trying to reach broader society in which everyone could enjoy the benefits of becoming ASEAN people.

One of the remarkable effort of ASEAN Secretariat to uphold people-oriented ASEAN is with involving CSOs in regional governance. Kelly Gerrard (2013) elaborates that it started from late 1990s forums in Southeast Asia. With two most sustaining forum the ASEAN People's Assembly (APA) that founded by ASEAN-ISIS and the ASCS or ASEAN Civil Society Conference that started in 2005. For APA, held for seven times in the period of 2000 up to 2009 while ACSC nine times from its establishment year.

Civil society organizations believed to be a bridge for the ASEAN Secretariat to create a more 'people-oriented' ASEAN. This is because of communities from different groups representing their ideas with the framework that CSOs could provide for them. By listening to their inputs, the ASEAN Secretariat could collaborate in many sectors with numbers of stakeholder that work in their specialization.

There are several examples of relations that the ASEAN Secretariat established to engage with the advocacy that being promoted by CSOs. The examples are the ASEAN Youth Forum, Southeast Asian Committee for Advocacy, FORUM-ASIA, Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia, Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Network, Child Rights Coalition and etcetera.

With the commitment to engage with society, ASEAN has developed a robust framework to establish ASEAN Identity truly.