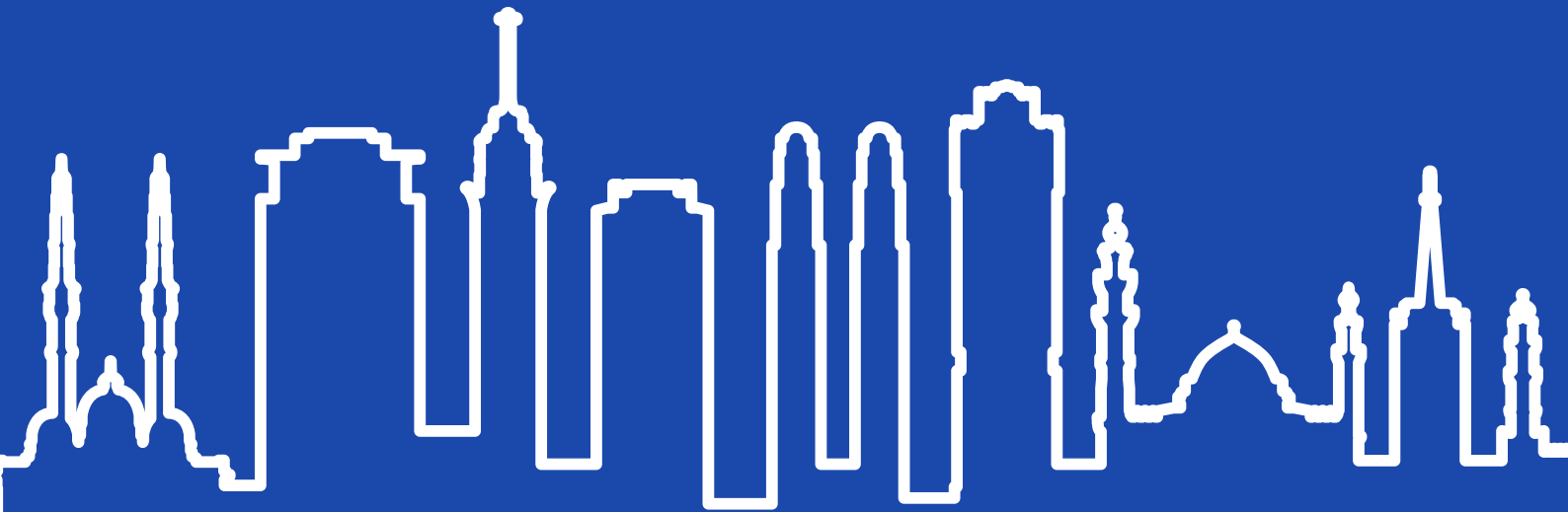




ASEAN BUSINESS  
YOUTH ASSOCIATION

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# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2021



# STENZCO

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# LETTER FROM ADVISORY BOARD



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Malminderjit Singh



Wendy Tan



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Dr Priscilla Koh



Joel Shen



Vicky Makhija

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is one of the most important regions in the world. Economically, the region of 10 countries does not just include some of Asia's most exciting, dynamic and innovative economies, it also packs a punch collectively. As a trade bloc, ASEAN's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is set to exceed US\$4 trillion by 2025, making it one of the top five economies in the world. It is also the world's fastest growing trade bloc with exports projected to increase from US\$1.3 trillion in 2021 to US\$2.8 trillion in 2025. This should be hardly surprising since geo-strategically, ASEAN centrality has formed the bedrock for the two largest free trade agreements in the world – the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

It is imperative for the youth of the region to participate in, leverage on and contribute to this enormous potential and growth ASEAN has to offer. With more than 380 million people under the age of 35 – accounting for 61 per cent of the grouping's total population - the ASEAN region has a strong demographic dividend. But this will matter if the young in the region have the right skills, resources, and opportunities.

Here is where an organisation like the ASEAN Business Youth Association (ABYA) can make a substantial difference. According to a 2019 World Economic Forum study, more than half of the youths in the region believe they should upgrade their skills constantly and are aware of the threats technology and disruption pose to their current skills.

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# LETTER FROM ADVISORY BOARD

As a platform that can reach out to youth across the region, and which has proven partnerships with industry and academia, ABYA can help plug the skills gap that is unravelling across ASEAN. Interestingly, the study also revealed that most youth in ASEAN place internships as equally or more important than formal education to learn new skills. ABYA's activities, such as its LEAPS programme, will help provide these opportunities for on-the-job training and mentorship.

However, ASEAN youth are also less enthusiastic and optimistic about their futures with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and more inclined to multinational corporation (MNCs). This has to change as SMEs form the heartbeat of many of the region's economies. Moreover, ASEAN needs a strong SME sector to help it realise the region's potential growth. Without a strong pipeline of talent, the SME sector will be choked and may stagnate. Further, ASEAN, as the world's largest digitally-enabled population, will see eCommerce grow to US\$88 billion by 2025. This trend will push many SMEs in the region to also go digital and, in doing so, seek updated skills while also being more innovative and appealing to the young. As an Advisor to ABYA, I believe it can play a critical role in identifying opportunities for young in the region with SMEs, matching young jobseekers with SMEs and also helping the youth realise the benefits of being involved in the SME sector. On the flip side, SMEs will find it beneficial to partner an organisation like ABYA to get access to young and skilled talent. With such a structure in place, the future for ASEAN, ABYA, and the region's youth looks even brighter.

**Malminderjit Singh**  
**Founding Advisor, ABYA**  
**On behalf of the Advisory Board**

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# LETTER FROM ABYA PRESIDENT



Projected to be the 4th largest economy in the world by 2030, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region is growing in prominence on the world stage. The region's potential urged a group of 7 enthusiastic youths to pitch and kickstart ASEAN Business Youth Association (ABYA) in the inaugural Spark The Next's Youth Action Challenge, organised by the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (MCCY), National Youth Council (NYC), and People's Association Youth Movement (PAYM) in Singapore. ABYA emerged as the runner-up team and was awarded with a seed grant to develop and run this initiative.

Officially legalised as a society in 2021, ABYA aims to be the bridge for youths to increase their knowledge and gain a foothold in ASEAN through participating in our programmes. Based on our Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and survey, we have gained insights into the youths' needs and identified the underlying gaps in the market. Our findings also led to the development of ABYA's two main programmes - ABYA Explore and ABYA Leadership, Exploration, and Progress (LEAPS) to further our mission of developing future ASEAN leaders to work with or in ASEAN.

With the volatile coronavirus pandemic, many youths were left struggling to cope with a rapidly changing and increasingly challenging work environment. ABYA was born in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic and discovered the importance of youths upskilling themselves in these trying times.

Our programmes started off to focus on three main pillars – Political, Economic, and Culture (PEC) – of the region. In 2021, we experienced tremendous growth by a 700% increase in participation in ABYA LEAPS. Most notably, we expanded on our existing programmes and resources, as well as worked with our corporate partners, corporate advisor, and co-organisers to provide opportunities for the youths to work on projects that are according to the latest industry trends.

ABYA Explore is another core programme that provides PEC aspects to the ASEAN youths. Our programme allows youths to gain exposure and knowledge about the ASEAN region. Over 2,000 attendees were exposed to a series of industry sharing sessions, ranging from workshops, webinars and masterclasses.

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# LETTER FROM ABYA PRESIDENT

Aside from ABYA Explore, ABYA is humbled to have our Advisor - Dr Priscilla Koh, who has extensive knowledge in the ASEAN region, to conduct our inaugural Cultural Masterclass to our members. This is on top of our weekly curated 'A Future In ASEAN' content. These knowledge sharing platforms aim to inform our followers about updated current affairs and industry knowledge about the ASEAN region.

Given our broad and in-depth range of programmes, we are humbled to impact more than 3,000 individuals in 2021. With this outstanding achievement, ABYA will strive to continue providing opportunities to be updated with industry trends and for youths to be prepared for the workforce in the region. Our achievement would not have been possible without the support of our supporting partner organisations, advisors, dedicated executives and engaged members. We are deeply grateful for their great support and partnership in furthering this vision for youths in ASEAN.

As we embark on 2022, ABYA is excited to continue building a vibrant and connected network between companies and youths across the ASEAN region. We aim to be a platform to prepare youths to not only take charge of their own careers but also represent what it means to be ASEAN business leaders of tomorrow.

We look forward to welcoming more like-minded individuals, working with our dedicated executives, and collaborating with our invaluable partners as we continue building the ABYA community together.

**Veronica Low Kai Lin**  
**Founder and President of ASEAN Business Youth Association (ABYA)**



# ABOUT US

ASEAN Business Youth Association (ABYA) first started with a team of 7 youths in March 2020. Since then, it has expanded to a vibrant community of 255 youth members. ABYA is very thankful to its 40 dedicated executives who have stepped up to the challenge and championed ABYA's successes in marketing, partnerships, and programmes through their hard work on initiatives such as ABYA Explore and ABYA Leadership, Exploration, and Progress (LEAPS).



With a vision to be the leading youth organisation that nurtures future ASEAN business leaders, ABYA is a youth-led organisation aimed at empowering a community of ASEAN youths to work and communicate effectively with fellow Southeast Asians and drive cooperative efforts to secure shared economic success. ABYA strives to provide cross-cultural training, exposure, application, and networking for its members, participants, and ASEAN youths in the region.

In support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ABYA works towards three SDGs, namely decent work and economic growth, sustainable cities and communities, and partnerships for the goals.



ABYA helps to achieve higher economic productivity through business collaborations, supports positive economic, social, and environmental links between different regions through national and regional development planning, as well as encourages and promotes effective partnerships between public, private, and civil societies.