



Photo Credit: UN Women/flickr.com via Creative Commons

Migration and Health Equity: Priority Areas for ASEAN Community 2025

By Danielle Lynn Goh

Migration has become increasingly complex and diverse. While migration can present economic opportunities and growth, at the same time, migrants, in particular low-wage migrant workers, undocumented migrants, and refugees, often face differential access to healthcare services, are more at risk of poverty, and are more likely to live in poorer living conditions. The [UN 2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development recognises the need to incorporate migration to make better progress towards the sustainable development goals and targets. On the regional level in Southeast Asia, the health of migrants has been included in [ASEAN's post-2015 agenda](#). However, there are groups of migrants such as low-wage migrant workers and refugees that are not sufficiently included in national healthcare systems.

Differential Access to Healthcare

There is still a long way to go in terms of ensuring healthcare access and equity for migrant workers globally. In 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that the world is [off track](#) to make significant progress in achieving universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030. The [Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020](#) found that legal migrants, undocumented migrants and refugees are informed about their entitlements and use of health services in only 19 out of the 56 countries measured. In Southeast Asia, low-wage migrant workers in the region are especially

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vulnerable to health threats. An example would be migrant domestic workers, who are often excluded from labour and social security policies of the state.

Health risks of Refugees Exacerbated by Climate Change and Conflict

Climate change and conflict are resulting in more people being forcibly displaced worldwide. According to the UN, by the end of 2023, the global refugee population [increased](#) by 7 per cent, reaching 43.4 million, driven increasingly by ongoing conflicts and violence, these include in Sudan, Myanmar and in Gaza. The health implications for both refugees and host populations include malnutrition, increased risk of vector-borne diseases and water-borne diseases, heat-related morbidity and rise of infectious diseases. The relationship between health, migration and climate change is still largely unexamined, and more research needs to be done to highlight their linkages in specific migrant communities.

Migration and Health in ASEAN Community 2025

The health of migrants has been one of the priority areas in ASEAN's Post-2015 Health Development Agenda. Among the targets set by ASEAN in line with the sustainable development goals, includes that all ASEAN member states should work towards [at least 80 per cent](#) of documented migrants having access to healthcare in receiving countries by 2020. While there have been [improvements](#) in UHC coverage of ASEAN member states since 2000, there are still gaps that remain. For example, more data is needed on work injury compensation schemes and policies, long-term chronic diseases, gender inequalities, as well as issues faced by refugee populations.

In relation to building a more resilient ASEAN Community, the health of migrants should continue to be a priority for ASEAN, and should also address the specific challenges and gaps that more vulnerable groups such as low-wage migrants and refugees face. In Southeast Asia, most states do not have formal mechanisms for asylum seekers and refugees. National responses and policies to the movement of refugees are also often reactive. Policy makers should prioritise the linkages between migration, health and climate security, and to recognise that the welfare of migrants is

integral to the security of the host country. In the context of SDGs and Universal Health Coverage targets, migration must be integrated in global health efforts. Furthermore, beyond a focus on diseases and their spread, the social determinants of care of migrants must also be considered – this includes their well-being, living environment, as well as educational and employment opportunities.



Photo Credit: EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid/ Flickr.com

SUGGESTED READINGS

Kolitha Wickramage, Jo Vearey, Anthony B. Zwi, Courtland Robinson, and Michael Knipper. 2018. "Migration and health: a global public health research priority." *BMC Public Health* 18: 1-9.

Vannarath Te, Rachel Griffiths, Kristy Law, Peter S. Hill, and Peter Leslie Annear. 2018. "The impact of ASEAN economic integration on health worker mobility: a scoping review of the literature." *Health policy and planning* 33, no. 8: 957-965.

Helena Legido-Quigley, Fiona Leh Hoon Chuah, and Natasha Howard. "Southeast Asian health system challenges and responses to the 'Andaman Sea refugee crisis': a qualitative study of health-sector perspectives from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand." 2020. *PLoS Medicine* 17, no. 11: e1003143.

CLIMATE CHANGE



NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Climate change craziness has a new target and it's more shocking than ever

Having struck out with consumers, businesses and at the ballot box, now the greens are moving on to the courts. The climate change industrial complex has now joined forces with trial lawyers to advance their war on fossil fuels.

Stephen Moore

Fox News | 30 June 2024

Singapore a 'very attractive place' to develop new climate technology: Bill Gates

Breakthrough Energy, a climate organisation founded by Mr Gates, is partnering Enterprise Singapore and Temasek to identify and grow budding climate technology in Southeast Asia.

Richa Liz Mathew and Louisa Tang

Channel News Asia | 1 July 2024

Comment: What the world can learn from China about tackling climate change

As Chinese companies steadily dominate global market share across various sectors and align their business goals with clean energy and low-carbon solutions, there is a prime opportunity for foreign businesses operating in China to distinguish themselves by becoming first-movers in East-West regulatory collaboration. A good example here would be the collaboration between European and Chinese electric vehicle makers.

Peter Bakker

Reuters | 3 July 2024

What 6 degrees of warming means for a community built on ice

Alaska is warming up to three times faster than the rest of the world, and the Arctic is warming nearly double that. Despite the challenges, Alaskan inhabitants the Iñupiaq people are not going to change their entire way of life, but instead are making small adjustments to changing conditions.

Joseph Lee

Vox | 3 July 2024

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Global trends in climate change litigation: 2024 snapshot

At least 230 new climate cases were filed in 2023. Many of these are seeking to hold governments and companies accountable for climate action. However, the number of cases expanded less rapidly last year than previously, which may suggest a consolidation and concentration of strategic litigation efforts in areas anticipated to have high impact to a permanent breach of the lower 1.5°C Paris Agreement goal.

Joana Setzer and Catherine Higham

Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment | 2024

Sleepless nights

There is growing evidence that as nighttime temperatures rise, human sleep is being eroded around the world. The report found that the average person on Earth experienced 4.8 additional days above 20°C as a result of higher nighttime temperatures induced by climate change during summer (December-February in the Southern Hemisphere, June-August in the Northern Hemisphere).

Climate Central

2024

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific 2024

With the theme "Taking an Integrated Approach to Overcome the Triple Planetary Crisis," this year's International Forum on Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP) will showcase existing examples of an integrated approach are addressing the triple planetary crisis. ISAP will also consider how integration can influence a wider range of decisions in the Asia-Pacific and pave the way for transformative change globally.

Yokohama, Japan (Hybrid)

23 July 2024

ENERGY SECURITY



NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Dutch bank to pump \$30 million in renewables in Southeast Asia

FMO will co-invest alongside SUSI Asia Energy Transition Fund in order to build a renewable energy company, active mainly in Vietnam and the Philippines.

Thanh Van

Vietnam Investment Review | 28 June 2024

How South-East Asian countries can cooperate to enhance energy interconnectivity

At the national level, ASEAN countries could alleviate concerns regarding policy continuity and boost investor confidence by adopting legislation for net-zero emission targets, similar to the approaches taken by the UK and France.

Ratnesh Bedi, Asheesh Sastry and Toong-Yuen Chong

World Economic Forum | 3 July 2024

Singapore and Laos to deepen cooperation in carbon credits, education and renewable energy

The two countries intend to continue promoting collaboration in the areas of clean energy, food security, carbon credits and capacity building.

Goh Ruoxue

World Economic Forum | 9 July 2024

PH-US civil nuclear energy pact enters into force

The accord provides a comprehensive framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation with the Philippines based on a mutual commitment to nuclear nonproliferation.

Jordeene B. Lagare

Inquirer.net | 9 July 2024

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Integrating 100% renewable energy into electricity systems: A net-zero analysis for Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar

The three countries can integrate 100% renewable energy into their power systems by realizing their hydropower potential and deploying non-hydro renewables.

Kamia Handayani, Indra Overland, Beni Suryadi and Roman Vakulchuk

Energy Report, Vol.10 | 2023

Tracking SDG7: The energy progress report, 2024

This report summarises global progress on energy access, energy efficiency, renewable energy, clean cooking, and international cooperation to advance SDG 7.

Raphael J. Heffron, et al.

The World Bank | 2024

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

Asia Clean Energy Summit

ACES is the region's leading event focusing on clean energy technology, policy and finance supported by leading government agencies, research institutes and industry in Singapore.

Singapore

22-24 October 2024

FOOD SECURITY



NEWS & COMMENTARIES

AI can transform global food security and climate action

With global food insecurity felt by close to 300 million people, the author, who is also United Nations Under-Secretary-General, highlights the need for digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) in agriculture. These can help sustain agricultural productivity growth, achieve greener agrifood systems, and address the multifaceted capacity development needed by the Global South.

Tshilidzi Marwala

Context and Thomson Reuters Foundation | 27 June 2024

China passes new rural collective law to protect farmers' land rights

In China, collectives typically exercised the land lease rights on farmers' behalf. Amidst growing stress on food systems globally, China is looking to implement structural reforms to potentially improve the economic environment faced by its farmers. Its most recent move is a new law that gives farmers oversight over the collectives, which ironically, have been criticised for not giving farmers sufficient voice.

Reuters

The Straits Times | 28 June 2024

SEARCA consults stakeholders, poised to establish agri research consortium

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), recently established a new consortium for driving agricultural transformation toward sustainable and inclusive development in the region. Prof Paul S. Teng and Dr Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros, from RSIS, served as co-facilitators in shaping its "impact-pathway."

SEARCA

4 July 2024

Emergency grain stockpiling highlights world's food worries

In earlier months, the European Union leveraged "wargaming" to simulate diverse factors that could lead to a global food crisis, including El Niño/La Niña-driven harvest failures, fertilizer shortages, and wars. These led to proposals for regional food reserve management and upgrading storage facilities. Norway, which tops the 2022 Global Food Security Index, is pushing for expanding grain reserve storage capacity, led by an agrarian centrist political party as Norway's largest party today.

Agnieszka de Sousa

Bloomberg | 5 July 2024

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Inflation in times of overlapping emergencies: Systemically significant prices from an input-output perspective

As global inflation has returned even after countries have transitioned away from COVID-19 shutdowns, the authors argue that such bouts of inflation are first sectoral, before they translate to broad-based general inflation. In this article, the authors simulated disruptions to identify which sectors are most sensitive and also systemically important, to the United States. They argue that in sectors such as farming, food and beverages, among others, there is need to go beyond monetary policy in keeping inflation at bay.

Isabella M. Weber et al.,

Industrial and Corporate Change, 33, 297–341

2024

Analyzing market power of the agricultural industry in Asia

This paper seeks to assess the presence of market power in primary foods industries in Asia. Given information constraints, it proposes a novel methodology that leverages input-output tables across 43 Asian countries, to measure markups (the difference between the selling price of a good, and the cost of producing the good) as estimates of market power by companies over producers (e.g., farmers, hunters, fishermen). It finds that market power has been increasing from 1995 to 2015, although countries with greater integration into the global economy (trade, investments) helps to reduce the market power of companies relative to producers, thus stressing the need for more economic integration in critical primary foods industries.

Adrián Rodríguez del Valle and Esteban Fernández-

Vázquez, Economic Analysis and Policy, 81, 652-669

2024

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

2nd Annual Food Security Asia Congress: Accelerating the pace for sustainable food systems

This congress seeks to provide a platform for thought leaders in animal husbandry, nutrition and agrifood as well as life science solution providers, academia, and policy makers to discuss key developments in areas such as sustainable agri-technology; bridging gaps between rural economy and technology advancement; and the impacts of global policy on Southeast Asia's food industry, among others.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

11-12 September 2024

HEALTH SECURITY



Photo Credit: Freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

A global pledge to immunize half a billion and strengthen our global health security

The U.S. government pledged \$1.58 billion to Gavi over five years, aiming to vaccinate a billion children and save over eight million lives. This includes launching the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator to promote vaccine equity.

Office of Press Relations

U.S. Agency for International Development | 20 June 2024

MeDevIS platform announced to boost access to medical technologies and devices

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched MeDevIS, a global open-access platform for medical device information. It supports decision-making in health care by providing data on 2,301 device types. The platform was publicly released on July 8, 2024.

World Health Organization

8 July 2024

Immunizations across the life course to strengthen health security

This CSIS commentary urges the U.S. to fully fund Gavi, align health initiatives globally, strengthen domestic and regional vaccine manufacturing, support advocacy for immunization, integrate vaccines into health services, train health workers, and expand vaccine access for all ages to bolster global health security. Recommendations emphasize pandemic preparedness, equitable vaccine distribution, and addressing gaps in routine immunization for adolescents and adults worldwide.

Katherine E. Bliss

Center for Strategic and International Studies | 9 July 2024

Health-Security Interface Technical Advisory group (HSI-TAG) meeting July 2024

The World Health Organization (WHO) The WHO's Health-Security Interface Advisory Group will meet in Geneva on July 9-10, 2024, to review projects, regional priorities, and future strategies for health security, advancing their advisory role.

World Health Organization

10 July 2024

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Meeting gaps in the public health workforce during emergencies: how a nongovernmental organization support critical staffing needs in the COVID-19 Response

During the COVID-19 pandemic, US public health departments, \$265 million from the CDC to deploy 3,014 staff across 91 jurisdictions to address staff shortages.

C. Fertowski

Health Security, 22:3, 235-243 | 2024

Comparing priority received by global health issues: a measurement framework applied to tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhoeal diseases and dengue fever

The study assessed health issue priority in global and national agendas. TB and malaria ranked highest historically, while diarrhoeal diseases declined; dengue garnered increased attention despite low global priority.

R. Parashar, et al.

BMJ Global Health, 9:7 | 2024

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

8th World One Health Congress

The 8th World One Health Congress will be held in Cape Town from September 20-23, 2024. The event will feature an agenda focusing on One Health science, antimicrobial resistance, and science-policy interface. It aims to address global challenges, share research, and highlight African perspectives, gathering global stakeholders across sectors.

Cape Town, South Africa

20-23 September 2024

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF



Photo Credit: EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr.com/Creative Commons

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

As the UN's 'fixer-in-chief' steps down, a look at Martin Griffiths' record

Martin Griffiths is stepping down as leader of UNOCHA. In this era of the polycrisis, his time as relief chief has been generally well-regarded, although not without criticism. His successor is set to face a challenging landscape with multiple crisis burning and pressures facing funding and trust in the global aid system.

Will Worley

The New Humanitarian | 3 July 2024

Everyone says they want "localization" in anticipatory action — but what does that mean?

Investment in smarter early warning systems is growing around the world, particularly as a response to changing climate risks. It is therefore key to understand how to design and implement anticipatory action can encourage the localisation of decision-making.

Evan Easton-Calabria

Tufts University | 3 July 2024

How conflict dynamics in Myanmar are challenging state-centric humanitarianism

While the conflict in Myanmar is geographically widespread, the extent of which and subsequent humanitarian outcome still vary significantly across the country. Such outcomes are dependent on several factors including local capacities for delivering aid.

Shona Long

IISS | 9 July 2024

Power of data: Leaving no one uncouncted or unaccounted

The advancements in data collection over the last 30 years have led to significant improvements in the effectiveness of humanitarian work, particularly in women's access to healthcare. It can also highlight the gaps that remain in access, allowing humanitarian actors increased awareness of areas to focus.

Pio Smith

UNFPA | 11 July 2024

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

UNDRR Sendai Framework Monitor: Decrease in global disaster mortality, rise in affected populations

Highlighting both advancements and challenges in global disaster risk reduction efforts, this report presents the latest findings from the Sendai Framework Monitor.

UNDRR | 2024

Change without transformation: how narratives influenced the humanitarian cash agenda

This report examines the increasing use of cash transfers as a humanitarian tool. It seeks to understand the its potential applications to other reform agendas for the humanitarian sector.

John Bryant and Leen Fouad

ODI | 2024

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

The stories humanitarians tell (and why they need to change)

Going beyond a narrative of self-preservation, humanitarian actors need to embrace their role as storytellers and not merely collectors of static data when seeking to shape the stories that affect crisis response. This podcasts brings together humanitarian experts to examines the narratives told by the humanitarian sectors, and its relevance to an increasingly fragmented global landscape.

Recorded Podcast

2024

MIGRATION



Photo Credit: UN Women on Flickr.com/Creative Commons

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Immigrants really do get the job done

In the US, migration has become a politicised issue, topping polls as the number one political concern for Americans. Anti-migrant sentiment seems to be on the rise in the US and in Europe, stoked by political campaigns. In truth, immigration is far from being America's worst problem, but is key to addressing labour shortages and inflation.

Rana Foroohar

Financial Times | 8 July 2024

Rights groups in Indonesia pushing for new law to better protect domestic workers against abuse, overwork

Indonesian labour rights organisations are advocating for the House of Representatives to expedite the passing of a bill that protects the rights of domestic workers. Since it was proposed in 2004, the bill has made some progress but has stalled at various stages.

CNA

20 June 2024

Quality of migrant worker recreation centres in Singapore to be improved

Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has appointed external parties such as NTUC to operate three migrant worker recreation centres. With NTUC at the helm, this would mean that a wider array of services, training and skills upgrading could be offered to migrant workers.

Kok Yufeng and Tay Hong Yi

The Straits Times | 28 June 2024

Surge in Palestinians applying for protection while in Australia prompts calls to create 'emergency uplift' visa

The number of Palestinians applying for protection in Australia has surged. Refugee advocates have called for the creation of an emergency uplift visa, rather than refugees relying on tourist visas to flee from the conflict in Gaza.

Paul Karp and Daisy Dumas

The Guardian | 1 July 2024

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Migration and climate change in the Arab Region

This publication shines the spotlight on the disproportionate effects of climate-induced migration and displacement on women and children, and the implications of climate change for food production in the Arab region, among other emerging challenges.

International Organization for Migration

2024

The grey window of temporary reintegration: the involuntary return and crisis-induced immobility of Filipino migrant workers

This journal article analyses how temporary reintegration is experienced among migrant workers who were repatriated and returned to the Philippines. The case study examines a group of Filipino cruise workers who were repatriated and could not sail during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Karen Anne S. Liao

2024

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

Connecting Immigrant Communities to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Services

This webinar included a discussion on the importance immigrant and refugee families having access to infant and early childhood mental-health services for the foundational early years for young immigrants, helping to promote healthy development and future well-being.

Recorded Webinar

5 April 2024