

DATA AT A GLANCE

ASEAN's Movement Towards Gender Equality in the Economic Sphere

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Since 2006, the Gender Gap Index has been used to describe the difference between men and women, in countries throughout the world, in four basic categories. One such category relates to economic participation and opportunity (EPO). In EPO, the values for women's labor force participation, wage, earned income, legislative/senior/managerial position, and professional/technical position are computed against the values for men in the same areas. A higher score suggests more equality, or better economic participation and opportunity, for women.

Table 1 shows the EPO scores of six ASEAN countries with complete 2006 (World Economic Forum, 2006) and 2017 data (World Economic Forum, 2017). The 2006 and 2017 scores suggest that these countries have already gone beyond the halfway point in achieving economic gender equality. The Philippines (0.757 in 2006 and 0.764 in 2017) and Thailand (0.722 in 2006 and 0.767 in 2017) have been the frontrunners.

Although the EPO scores of these six countries increased from 2006 to 2017, the pace of absolute change has been rather modest (range: 0.007-0.106). The movements of these countries to further advance gender equality in the economic domain are clearly not that significant even after 11 years.

Studies are needed to identify the factors that could help these ASEAN countries to close the persistent gender gap.

Table 1

Economic Participation and Opportunity Scores Among ASEAN Countries, 2006 Versus 2017

Country	2006	2017	Absolute Change
Cambodia	0.675	0.698	0.023
Indonesia	0.598	0.610	0.012
Malaysia	0.592	0.654	0.062
Philippines	0.757	0.764	0.007
Singapore	0.646	0.752	0.106
Thailand	0.722	0.767	0.045
Mean	0.665	0.708	0.043

Source: World Economic Forum (2006, 2017)

References

- World Economic Forum. (2006). *Global gender gap report 2006*. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2006.pdf
- World Economic Forum. (2017). *Global gender gap report 2017*. Retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf